

# STUDENT SAFETY IN THE JOB CORPS PROGRAM

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND THE WORKFORCE  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 22, 2017

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## **STUDENT SAFETY IN THE JOB CORPS PROGRAM**

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**Thursday, June 22, 2017  
House of Representatives,  
Committee on Education and the Workforce,  
Washington, D.C.**

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The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Virginia Foxx [chairwoman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Foxx, Hunter, Roe, Walberg, Guthrie, Rokita, Barletta, Messer, Grothman, Allen, Lewis, Mitchell, Garrett, Smucker, Ferguson, Estes, Scott, Davis, Fudge, Polis, Wilson of Florida, Bonamici, Takano, Adams, DeSaulnier, Norcross, Krishnamoorthi, Shea-Porter, and Espaillat.

Staff Present: Caitlin Burke, Legislative Assistant; Courtney Butcher, Director of Member Services and Coalitions; Amy Raaf Jones, Director of Education and Human Resources Policy; Jonas Linde, Professional Staff Member; Nancy Locke, Chief Clerk; Kelley McNabb, Communications Director; James Mullen, Director of Information Technology; Krisann Pearce, General Counsel; Clint Raine, Professional Staff Member; Lauren Reddington, Deputy Press Secretary; James Redstone, Professional Staff Member; Mandy Schaumburg, Education Deputy Director and Senior Counsel; Michael Woeste, Press Secretary; Tylease Alli, Minority Clerk/Intern and Fellow Coordinator; Jacque Chevalier, Minority Director of Education Policy; Denise Forte, Minority Staff Director; Nicole Fries, Minority Labor and Policy Associate; Christine Godinez, Minority Staff Assistant; Eunice Ikene, Minority Labor Policy Advisor; Stephanie Lalle, Minority Press Assistant; Kevin McDermott, Minority Senior Labor Policy Advisor; Richard Miller, Minority Senior Labor Policy Advisor; Udochi Onwubiko, Minority Labor Policy Counsel; Veronique Pluviose, Minority General Counsel; and Kimberly Toots, Minority Labor Policy Fellow.

Chairwoman Foxx. Good morning, everyone. A quorum being present, the Committee on Education and the Workforce will come to order.

Welcome to today's full committee hearing. I'd like to thank our panel of witnesses and all of our colleagues for joining today's very serious discussion on the safety and security of the Job Corps program. I also want to note my disappointment that the Office of Job Corps has decided not to testify today. The attendance would have provided the committee with important information about the pro-

gram and the measures taken by the Office of Job Corps to address these safety concerns.

The Job Corps program is intended to help some of our Nation's most disadvantaged youth receive high-quality education, workforce development and support services in order to become more employable, responsible and productive citizens. The very purpose of the program is to serve those who are hard to serve and the safety of students and instructors within the Job Corps program should be priority one. Unfortunately, that is not the case and that is what brings us to today's hearing.

The work of this committee, as well as other government bodies, such as the inspector general, have found a systemic and alarming lack of oversight in the safety and security of the Job Corps program. And we've reached a critical point where lives are in real danger if Congress does not act. In fact over 30 different government reports and audits have raised concerns over the safety and security of the Job Corps program. A 2009 IG report even noted that, quote, "40 percent of 235 significant incidents occurring at six centers during our audit period were not reported."

Even in 2015 an IG report specifically stated, quote, "Job Corps needs to improve enforcement and oversight of student disciplinary policies to better protect students and staff." end quote.

What is truly shocking and sad is that nine student deaths and a number of other violent or health-related incidents have occurred just since 2015 as a result of lapses in safety and security. These reports are extremely troubling and no program, no program sponsored by the Federal Government should have such tragedies associated with it.

The committee has spent almost 2 years investigating and asking about these repeated lapses in safety and security within the Job Corps program and we are still without answers.

What we do know is that the deficiencies and proper security measures are not isolated nor associated with one specific Job Corps center. This is a systemic problem throughout the Job Corps program. The security failures within Job Corps are a failure in basic good governance and jeopardize the safety of American citizens.

Today we will hear testimony from witnesses who have made findings highlighting the troubling lack of safety and oversight in Job Corps centers. We will hear testimony about failures in reporting violent incidences, security lapses and a lack of cooperation with law enforcement officials.

While these facts may be troubling, it is vital that we as a committee understand just where the lack of oversight has occurred in order for us to make proper recommendations to keep the Job Corps program safe for the future.

The Job Corps program was designed to help disadvantaged young people gain the skills they need to achieve a good education, find a good paying job and have a successful life. Putting the students and instructors of the Job Corp program in harm's way does a disservice to its participants and the American taxpayers.

I wish to thank the members of this committee for joining this discussion and thank our witnesses for coming up and talking to us today.

I now yield to Ranking Member Scott for his opening remarks.  
[The statement of Chairwoman Foxx follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Virginia Foxx, Chairwoman, Committee on  
Education and the Workforce**

Good morning, and welcome to today's full committee hearing. I'd like to thank our panel of witnesses and my colleagues for joining today's very serious discussion on the safety and security of the Job Corps program. I also want to note my disappointment that the Office of Job Corps has decided not to testify today. Their attendance would have provided the committee with important information about the program and the measures taken by the Office of Job Corps to address these safety concerns.

The Job Corps program is intended to help some of our nation's most disadvantaged youth receive high quality education, workforce development, and support services in order to become more employable, responsible, and productive citizens. The very purpose of the program is to serve those who are hard to serve and the safety of students and instructors within the Job Corps program should be priority one. Unfortunately that is not the case, and that is what brings us to today's hearing.

The work of this committee, as well as other government bodies such as the Inspector General, have found a systemic and alarming lack of oversight in the safety and security of the Jobs Corps program, and we have reached a critical point where lives are in real danger if congress does not act.

In fact, over 30 different government reports and audits have raised concerns over the safety and security of the Jobs Corps program. A 2009 IG report even noted that "40 percent of 235 significant incidents occurring at [six] centers during our audit period were not reported."

Even in 2015, an IG report specifically stated, "Job Corps needs to improve enforcement and oversight of student disciplinary policies to better protect students and staff."

What is truly shocking and sad is that nine student deaths and a number other violent or health related incidents have occurred just since 2015 as a result of lapses in safety and security.

These reports are extremely troubling, and no program sponsored by the federal government should have such tragedies associated with it.

This committee has spent almost two years investigating and asking about these repeated lapses in safety and security within the Job Corps program, and we are still without answers.

What we do know is that the deficiencies in proper security measures are not isolated, or associated with one specific Job Corps center. This is a systemic problem throughout the Job Corps program.

The security failures within Job Corps are a failure in basic good governance, and jeopardize the safety of American citizens.

Today we will hear testimony from witnesses who have made findings highlighting the troubling lack of safety and oversight in Job Corps centers.

We will hear testimony of failures in reporting violent incidents, security lapses, and a lack of cooperation with law enforcement officials.

While these facts may be troubling, it is vital that we as a committee understand just where the lack of oversight has occurred in order for us to make proper recommendations to keep the Job Corps program safe for the future.

The Jobs Corps program was designed to help disadvantaged young people gain the skills they need to achieve a good education; find a good-paying job; and have a successful life.

Putting the students and instructors of the Job Corps program in harm's way does a disservice to its participants and the American taxpayers.

I wish to thank the members of this committee for joining this discussion, and thank our witnesses for coming up and talking to us today.

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Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to welcome our witnesses and thank them for their testimony.

Today's hearing we'll discuss safety and security issues at Job Corps programs.

Madam Chair, I certainly agree with you that violence is unacceptable and that safety, health and security of the Job Corps stu-

dents and staff is critically important. I appreciate the inspector general's attention to these issues over the years and I believe the Department of Labor must continue to aggressively implement the corrective action initiated under the Obama administration and make additional improvements as necessary.

We have to work together to make sure the Job Corps students and staff are living and working in safe environments. But we also have to recognize that the Job Corp program has a vital mission. We must recognize and appreciate the opportunities it provides for approximately 60,000 of America's disadvantaged and vulnerable youth every year.

Madam Chair, as you know, an estimated 60 percent of Job Corps students dropped out of school or were expelled from school. In addition, 56 percent entered the program reading at or below the eighth grade level. Virtually all Job Corps students are from low-income families. Job Corps provides a safer environment for these young people and it's transformative for the overwhelming number of students who finish the program. In 2015, more than 80 percent of Job Corps graduates found a job, went on to college, or entered the military, and 71 percent received an industry recognized credential before graduation.

Rigorous evaluations of the Job Corps found the program increases educational levels and earnings with youth over 20 finding the most benefit. As the data and evaluation show, Job Corps is the ticket to helping disadvantaged youth achieve their educational goals, obtain a well-paying job, serve in the military, and build a better future for themselves. For some, Job Corps is a second chance. For others, it actually saved their lives.

So as we discuss the legitimate concerns raised in the inspector general and GAO report regarding safety and security at Job Corps, I think it is reasonable to ask where these young people would be without the Job Corps program and how safe would they be.

In Mr. Barton's testimony, he notes that the national mortality rate for 16 to 24 year olds between 2012 and 2015 was 70.88 per 100,000. That's 70 for every 100,000, 70 died. Comparable rate for Job Corps 4.7. That's 70 died out in the public, only 4.7 in the Job Corps programs. That means the risk of death for young people 16 to 24 nationally was 15 times worse than Job Corps students. And what do we pay for the Job Corps program each year pales in comparison to what we would be on track to pay for some of these young people if they are incarcerated, on public assistance, or on Medicaid.

Madame Chair, nearly 5 million our Nation's youth are both out of school and out of work. In 2015, 14 percent of youth aged 16 to 24 were unemployed, double the national unemployment rate. Twenty-two percent of youth do not graduate from high school, 40 percent of those who do are ill prepared for work or higher education. Now whether they have personal barriers to college and career such as involvement in juvenile or criminal justice system or come from low opportunity communities, our nation's disadvantaged youth deserves a chance to succeed. To make that happen we should not undermine, consolidate or eliminate educational and vocational programs such as Job Corps, whose students as Mr. Bar-



ton will eloquently say, call him every day, every single holiday break asking if they could return to the Job Corps center because they are concerned about violence in their community, the temptation of drugs or their own safety.

The Job Corps centers are their refuge. So yes, let's be sure that we identify problems and work on problems identified by the inspector general. And we need to continue -- those problems have to be addressed, but let's not shoot at the wrong target. We need more Job Corps programs than ever. With this in mind, I am trying to say that our committee has advanced bipartisan legislation to expand opportunities for young people.

Last year we passed Every Student Succeeds Act in a bipartisan way. We've moved the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act reauthorization. Later today on the floor, we will vote to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act all on a bipartisan basis.

So I hope we will continue that tradition by providing opportunities for young people in the future as we work towards reauthorizing and strengthening the Job Corps program.

Before I conclude, Madam Chair, I want to join with you in saying that it is unfortunate that the Office of Job Corps withdrew from testifying in today's hearing. They would have been able to speak on how they have been able to address problems and concerns identified by the inspector general over the years.

I would ask the Job Corps program about their zero tolerance policy. In the K through 12 system, we have seen that zero tolerance policies are based on zero common sense and have been found to be ineffective in promoting safety.

Under the Job Corps' current zero tolerance program, a young person could be kicked out of Job Corps for being tardy for class or failing to adhere to a dress code. This policy is counterproductive and fails to ensure that Job Corps students have meaningful opportunities to succeed.

Again, Madam Chair, thank you for convening the hearing. I look forward to the testimony of the witnesses and yield back the balance of my time.

[The statement of Mr. Scott follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, Ranking Member,  
Committee on Education and the Workforce**

I would like to welcome our witnesses and thank them for their testimony. Today's hearing will discuss safety and security issues at Job Corps.

I certainly agree with Chairwoman Foxx that violence is unacceptable and the safety, health, and security of Job Corps' students and staff is critically important. I appreciate the Inspector General's attention to these issues over the years, and I believe the Department of Labor must continue to aggressively implement the corrective action initiated under the Obama Administration and make additional improvements as necessary.

We must work together to make sure Job Corps' students and staff are living and working in safe environments, but must not stop there.

We must also stand together in strong support of Job Corps and its vital mission. We must recognize and appreciate the opportunities it provides for approximately 60,000 of America's disadvantaged and vulnerable youth every year.

Madam Chair, as you know, an estimated 60 percent of Job Corps students dropped out of or were expelled from school. In addition, 56 percent enter the program reading at or below an eighth-grade level. Virtually all Job Corps students are from low-income families.

Job Corps provides a safer environment for these young people and is transformational for the overwhelming number of students who finish the program. In 2015, more than 80 percent of Job Corps graduates found a job, went on to college, or entered the military and 71 percent received an industry-recognized credential before graduation. Rigorous evaluations of the Job Corps have found that the program increases education levels and earnings, with youth over 20 finding the most benefit.

As the data and evaluations show, Job Corps is a ticket to helping disadvantaged youth achieve their educational goals, obtain a well-paying job, serve in the military, and build a better future for themselves. For some, Job Corps is a second chance. For others, it saved their lives.

So as we discuss the legitimate issues raised by the Inspector General and GAO regarding the safety and security with Job Corps today, I think it's reasonable to ask where these young people would be without Job Corps. Where and how safe would they be if not for this program?

In Mr. Barton's testimony, he notes that the national mortality rate for 16 to 24-year-olds between 2012 and 2015 was 70.88 per 100,000, while the comparable rate for Job Corps centers was 4.7. That means the risk of death for young people 16 to 24 nationally is 15 times greater than the risk for Job Corps students.

And what we pay for the Job Corps program each year pales in comparison to what we would be on track to pay for some of these young people if they are incarcerated, on public assistance, and on Medicaid.

Madam Chair, nearly 5 million of our nation's youth are both out of school and out of work. In 2015, 14 percent of youth ages 16 to 24 years old were unemployed—more than double the national unemployment rate. Twenty-two percent of our youth do not graduate from high school, and 40 percent of those who do are ill-prepared for work or higher education.

Whether they have personal barriers to college and career, such as involvement in the juvenile or criminal justice system, or come from low-opportunity communities, our nation's disadvantaged youth deserve a chance to succeed.

To help make that happen, we should not undermine, consolidate, or eliminate education and vocational training programs such as Job Corps whose students—as Mr. Barton eloquently put it in his testimony—call him every single holiday break asking if they can return to the Job Corps center because they are concerned about violence in their community, the temptation to use drugs, or their own safety. Job Corps centers are their refuge.

So, yes, let's make sure the problems identified by the Inspector General continue to be addressed by the Labor Department, but let's not shoot at the wrong target here.

We need Job Corps more than ever, and we need more of it.

With that in mind, I am proud to say that our Committee has advanced bipartisan legislation to expand opportunities for young people. We have moved the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Reauthorization; and later today we will vote to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

I hope we will continue that tradition of providing opportunities for young people in the future as we work toward reauthorizing and strengthening Job Corps.

Before I conclude, I just want to say that it's unfortunate the Office of Job Corps withdrew from testifying at today's hearing. They would have been able to speak to how they have been addressing the problems and concerns identified by the Inspector General over the years.

I also would have asked them about Job Corps' zero tolerance policy. In the K-12 system, we've seen that zero tolerance policies are based on zero common sense and ineffective in promoting safety. Under Job Corps' current zero tolerance policy, a young person could be kicked out of Job Corps for being tardy for class or failing to adhere to dress code. This policy is counterproductive and fails to ensure that Job Corps students have a meaningful opportunity to succeed.

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Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you, Mr. Scott.

Pursuant to committee rule 7(c), all members will be permitted to submit written statements to be included in the permanent hearing record. Without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days to allow such statements and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted for the official hearing record.

I now turn to introductions of our distinguished witnesses. Ms. Cindy Brown Barnes is the Director of Education Workforce and Income Security with the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Mr. Jeffrey Barton is the academy director for the Earle C. Clements Job Corps Academy in Morganfield, Kentucky. Mr. Larry Turner is the deputy inspector general for the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

I now ask our witnesses to raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Chairwoman Foxx. Let the record reflect the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Before I recognize each of you to provide your testimony, let me briefly explain our lighting system. We allow 5 minutes for each witness to provide testimony. When you begin, the light in front of you will turn green. When 1 minute is left, the light will turn yellow. At the 5 minute mark, the light will turn red and you should wrap up your testimony. Members will each have 5 minutes to ask questions.

I now recognize Ms. Barnes for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF CINDY BROWN BARNES, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION WORKFORCE AND INCOME SECURITY, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C.**

Ms. BARNES. Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Scott and members of the committee, I am pleased to be here today to discuss GAO's preliminary observations on the safety and security of students in the Job Corps program. This work is part of our recently started effort to examine this issue.

Job Corps is the Nation's largest residential, educational and career development program for low-income youth between the ages of 16 and 24. The program is administered by the Department of Labor and currently serves about 50,000 students each year at 125 Job Corps centers nationwide.

My remarks today will cover one, the number and types of reported safety and security incidents. And two, student perceptions of safety at Job Corps centers.

For this testimony we analyze the Department of Labor's incident data from January 2007 through June 2016. Due to concerns about the completeness of the data, we report the minimum number of incidents in the aggregate for those 9 years, but the actual numbers are likely higher. We also analyzed national student survey data from March 2007 through March 2017. Overall, we found that Job Corps centers reported nearly 50,000 safety and security incidents of various types that occurred both on site and off site from January 2007 through June 2016.

During this time period, over 500,00 students were enrolled in the program. We found that 76 percent or about 38,000 of the reported incidents occurred on site and 24 percent occurred off site. In addition, about 21 percent of reported incidents involved violence.

As you can see, with the figure on the monitor, three types of incidents represent 60 percent of all reported on site and off site incidents. Serious illnesses or injuries are 28 percent, assaults at 19 percent, and drug related incidents at 13 percent. The remaining

40 percent of reported incidents included theft, or damage to property, and breaches of security or safety, and other incidents.

During this time, Job Corps centers reported 265 deaths captured in the other and assault categories in the figure on the screen. And the majority of these deaths occurred off site. Most of these deaths were due to homicides, medical causes and accidental causes.

As shown in the table on the screen, Job Corps centers reported over 10,000 violent incidents, which include homicides, assaults and sexual assaults. Students were the majority of the victims in 72 percent of these reported violent incidents and perpetrators in 85 percent of these incidents. Staff were victims in 8 percent of these incidents and perpetrators in 1 percent of these incidents.

As for the student survey data, we found that students generally reported feeling safe, but reported feeling less safe with respect to certain safety issues. The student survey asked 49 questions about students' experiences in the Job Corp program, including 12 questions related to safety. Across these 12 survey questions an average of 72 percent of students reported feeling safe.

However, the average percentage of students who reported feeling safe on each individual survey question ranged from 44 percent to 91 percent. For example, an average of 44 percent of students reported that they had never heard students threaten each other or had not heard such threats within the last month. The remaining 56 percent of students on average reported hearing such threats at least once in the last month.

In conclusion, Job Corps students should be provided with a safe learning environment. However, as our preliminary analysis demonstrates, too many safety and security incidents are occurring at Job Corps centers and this is a cause for concern. And it is likely that the actual number of safety and security incidences is greater than the number we report in this statement. Our ongoing work will present opportunities for us to further examine these issues.

Thank you. This concludes my statement and I will be happy to entertain any questions.

[The statement of Ms. Barnes follows:]



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United States Government Accountability Office

Testimony  
Before the Committee on Education and  
the Workforce, House of  
Representatives

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For Release on Delivery  
Expected at 10:00 a.m. ET  
Thursday, June 22, 2017

## JOB CORPS

### Preliminary Observations on Student Safety and Security Data

Statement of Cindy Brown Barnes, Director,  
Education, Workforce, and Income Security



## GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-17-596T, a testimony before the Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives

### Why GAO Did This Study

The deaths of two Job Corps students in 2015 raised concerns about the safety and security of students in this program. The Job Corps program serves approximately 50,000 students each year at 125 centers nationwide.

Multiple DOL Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits have found deficiencies in the Office of Job Corps' efforts to oversee student safety. ETA and the Office of Job Corps have taken steps to address these concerns, but in March 2017, the DOL OIG raised new safety and security concerns, including some underreporting of incident data, and made related recommendations.

This testimony is based on GAO's ongoing work on these issues and provides preliminary observations on (1) the number and types of reported safety and security incidents involving Job Corps students, and (2) student perceptions of safety at Job Corps centers.

GAO analyzed ETA's reported incident data from January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2016. GAO's preliminary analysis summarizes reported incidents in the aggregate over this time period but the actual number is likely greater. GAO also analyzed student survey data from March 2007 through March 2017, reviewed relevant documentation, and interviewed ETA officials and DOL OIG officials.

### What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making recommendations in this testimony but will consider recommendations, as appropriate, when ongoing work is finished. GAO incorporated comments from ETA as appropriate.

View GAO-17-596T. For more information, contact Cindy Brown Barnes, (202) 512-7215, [brownbarnes@gao.gov](mailto:brownbarnes@gao.gov).

June 22, 2017

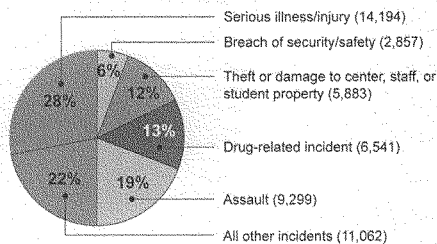
## JOB CORPS

### Preliminary Observations on Student Safety and Security Data

### What GAO Found

GAO's preliminary analysis of the Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) incident data found that Job Corps centers reported 49,836 safety and security incidents of various types that occurred both onsite and offsite between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2016. During this time period, approximately 539,000 students were enrolled in the program, according to ETA officials. ETA's Office of Job Corps is responsible for administering the Job Corps program, which is the nation's largest residential, educational, and career and technical training program for low-income youth generally between the ages of 16 and 24. As shown in the figure, the three most common types of reported incidents were serious illnesses or injuries, assaults, and drug-related incidents.

Types of Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers, January 1, 2007 – June 30, 2016



Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-17-596T

More than three-quarters of the reported incidents occurred onsite at Job Corps centers, and the rest occurred offsite. Most reported violent incidents—specifically assaults, homicides, and sexual assaults that occurred onsite and offsite—involved Job Corps students. For example, students were victims in 72 percent of these reported incidents, while staff were victims in 8 percent, and the remaining incidents involved victims who were not associated with Job Corps.

GAO's preliminary analysis of ETA's student survey data from March 2007 through March 2017 found that students generally reported feeling safe, but they reported feeling less safe with respect to certain issues. The student survey contains 49 questions about students' experiences in the Job Corps program, including 12 questions related to safety at centers. Across all 12 of these safety-related survey questions, an average of 72 percent of students reported feeling safe over this 10-year period. However, the average percentage of students who reported feeling safe on each individual survey question ranged from 44 percent to 91 percent. For example, an average of 44 percent of students reported that they had never heard students threaten each other, or had not heard such threats within the last month. The remaining 56 percent of students, on average, reported hearing such threats at least once in the last month.

United States Government Accountability Office





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Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our preliminary observations on the safety and security of students in the Job Corps program. Job Corps is the nation's largest residential, educational, and career and technical training program for low-income youth generally between the ages of 16 and 24.<sup>1</sup> The program is administered by the Office of Job Corps in the Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA), and serves approximately 50,000 students each year at 125 Job Corps centers nationwide.

DOL Office of Inspector General audits in 2009, 2010, and 2015 found that the Office of Job Corps did not properly address serious incidents related to student safety because of deficiencies in its oversight of program disciplinary policies.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the deaths of two students at two separate Job Corps centers in 2015 raised concerns. Since then, ETA and the Office of Job Corps have taken a number of steps to address safety and security concerns. In a March 2017 review, however, the Office of Inspector General found that the Office of Job Corps lacked an overall policy requiring centers to report potentially serious criminal misconduct to law enforcement, and that 12 Job Corps centers had physical security weaknesses, among other concerns, and made related recommendations.<sup>3</sup> In its response to a draft of the Office of Inspector

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<sup>1</sup>In general, individuals must be 16 to 21 at the time of enrollment to be eligible for the Job Corps program. While the law makes an exception to allow individuals who are 22 to 24 at the time of enrollment to participate in the program, it limits their participation to 20 percent of Job Corps participants. The age limits may be waived by DOL, in accordance with DOL regulations, for individuals with a disability. For the legal provisions governing this program, see 29 U.S.C. § 3191 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, *Job Corps Needs to Improve Enforcement and Oversight of Student Disciplinary Policies to Better Protect Students and Staff at Centers*, 26-15-001-03-370 (Washington, DC: February 27, 2015); *Performance Audit For ResCare, Inc., Job Corps Centers*, 26-10-002-01-370 (Washington, DC: March 2010); *Audit of Education and Training Resources, Job Corps Center Operator*, 26-10-003-01-370 (Washington, DC: March 2010); *Performance Audit of Adams and Associates, Incorporated Job Corps Centers*, 26-09-003-01-370 (Washington, DC: September 2009); and *Performance Audit of Management and Training Corporation Job Corps Centers*, 26-09-001-01-370 (Washington, DC: March 2009).

<sup>3</sup>Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, *Review of Job Corps Center Safety and Security*, 26-17-001-03-370 (March 31, 2017).

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General's report, ETA said it had already implemented most of these recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

My testimony today will provide preliminary information on (1) the number and types of reported safety and security incidents involving Job Corps students,<sup>5</sup> and (2) student perceptions of safety at Job Corps centers. This statement is based on our ongoing work examining safety and security issues in the Job Corps program.

To assess what is known about the number and types of reported incidents involving student safety and security at Job Corps centers, we analyzed ETA's incident data from January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2016.<sup>6</sup> ETA captures this data in its Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS). We assessed the reliability of the SIRS data by reviewing relevant agency documentation about the data and the system that produced them, and interviewing ETA officials knowledgeable about the data. We also interviewed officials from DOL's Office of Inspector General, which recently found that these data were incomplete for a non-generalizable sample of 12 of 125 Job Corps centers because they failed to report over a third of the incidents that occurred.<sup>7</sup> We determined, however, that the SIRS data were sufficiently reliable to report the minimum number of incidents, in aggregate, that occurred from January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2016. However, it is likely that the actual number of incidents was greater than the number we report in this statement. We plan to examine incident data in a more comprehensive manner in our ongoing work. The

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<sup>4</sup>Officials from DOL's Office of Inspector General told us that they had not yet closed any of these recommendations as of June 14, 2017.

<sup>5</sup>This statement provides information about safety and security incidents involving students who were enrolled in the Job Corps program. We do not provide information about applicants who had not yet enrolled in the program, or students who were on medical leave from the program. While the major focus of our effort was on incidents involving students, we do provide some information on incidents involving Job Corps program staff.

<sup>6</sup>We did not include incident data after June 30, 2016, due to ETA policy changes that became effective on July 1, 2016, which impacted the categorization and number of reportable incidents. Although ETA put some of these changes in place prior to July 1, 2016, centers were not required to officially implement these changes until July 1, 2016. As such, the incident data after July 1, 2016, are not comparable with earlier data. However, we plan to examine these data in our ongoing work.

<sup>7</sup>In its March 2017 report, DOL's Office of Inspector General found that these centers did not report 34 percent of significant incidents in SIRS from January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

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incident categories and definitions in this statement are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions, nor did we conduct any research into the nature of the underlying events that led to the reporting of the incident. In some cases, we made minor editorial changes to the names of the incident categories for reporting purposes.

To assess what is known about student perceptions of safety and security at Job Corps centers, we analyzed ETA's national, summary-level student satisfaction survey data from March 2007 through March 2017. We assessed the reliability of the data by reviewing relevant agency documentation about the data and the system that produced them, and interviewing ETA officials knowledgeable about the data. Based on this assessment, we determined that the student survey data were sufficiently reliable for our purposes. We plan to examine student survey data in a more comprehensive manner in our ongoing work. In addition, we reviewed Job Corps policies and guidance related to safety and security, including the Job Corps Policy and Requirements Handbook, which establishes program policies and requirements, and technical guidance for entering SIRS data. We also interviewed ETA officials regarding ETA's efforts to improve safety for Job Corps students.

We are conducting the work upon which this statement is based in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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## Background

### Job Corps' Eligibility Criteria and Program Services

To be eligible for the Job Corps program, an individual must generally be 16 to 24 years old at the time of enrollment;<sup>8</sup> be low income;<sup>9</sup> and have an additional barrier to education and employment, such as being homeless, a school dropout, or in foster care. Once enrolled in the program, youth are assigned to a specific Job Corps center, usually one located nearest their home and which offers a job training program of interest. The vast majority of students live at Job Corps centers in a residential setting, while the remaining students commute daily from their homes to their respective centers. This residential structure is unique among federal youth programs and enables Job Corps to provide a comprehensive array of services, including housing, meals, clothing, academic instruction, and job training.

### Job Corps' Structure and Operations

ETA administers Job Corps' 125 centers through its national Office of Job Corps under the leadership of a national director and a field network of six regional offices located in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Job Corps is operated primarily through contracts, which according to ETA officials, is unique among ETA's employment and training programs (other such programs are generally operated through grants to states). Among the 125 centers, 99 are operated under contracts with large and small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and Native American tribes. The remaining 26 centers (called Civilian Conservation Centers) are operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service through an interagency agreement with DOL. Job Corps center contractors and the USDA Forest Service employ center staff who provide program services to students. According to ETA officials, the primary responsibility for ensuring safety and security

<sup>8</sup>In general, individuals must be 16 to 21 at the time of enrollment to be eligible for the Job Corps program. While the law makes an exception to allow individuals who are 22 to 24 at the time of enrollment to participate in the program, it limits their participation to 20 percent of Job Corps participants. The age limits may be waived by DOL, in accordance with DOL regulations, for individuals with a disability. For the legal provisions governing this program, see 29 U.S.C. § 3191 et seq.

<sup>9</sup>The criteria for being considered low income include receiving certain public assistance or having a total family income that does not exceed the higher of the poverty line or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level.

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at Job Corps centers resides with center operators. Also, according to ETA officials, the Office of Job Corps has oversight and monitoring responsibility to ensure that contract operators are in full compliance with their contract and that both contract centers and USDA-operated Civilian Conservation Corps centers follow Job Corps' Policy and Requirements Handbook.

In September 2015, as part of its overall effort to improve safety and security for students, ETA established the Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity within the national Office of Job Corps. This division is responsible for coordinating regional operations and activities, including efforts to strengthen communications between the national and regional offices, strengthen quality assurance, and promote continuous improvement. The division is also responsible for reviewing the results of all risk management data, center safety and culture assessments, and responses to safety and security deficiencies at individual centers. For example, this division is to monitor the safety and security of Job Corps centers through ongoing oversight by regional offices, including daily monitoring of SIRS data.

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#### Requirements for Job Corps Centers Related to Incident Reporting

DOL's Policy and Requirements Handbook requires centers to report certain significant incidents to the national Office of Job Corps and to regional offices in SIRS within 6 or 24 hours of becoming aware of them, depending on the incident.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, centers are required to report numerous categories of incidents, including deaths, assaults, alcohol and drug-related incidents, serious illnesses and injuries, and hospitalizations (see appendix I for definitions of these categories of incidents).<sup>11</sup> Centers must report incidents involving both Job Corps students and staff, and incidents that occur onsite at centers as well as those that occur at offsite locations. Offsite incidents include those that occur while students are participating in program-related activities, such as off-center training and

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<sup>10</sup>According to the Policy and Requirements Handbook, centers must report most incidents within 24 hours of becoming aware of them. With respect to certain types of incidents, including deaths of students and on-duty staff, centers must report them immediately to the regional office, and report them in SIRS within 6 hours of becoming aware of them.

<sup>11</sup>When centers report these incidents in SIRS, they are required to assign them a primary incident type, and they may also assign them one or more secondary incident types. For example, the primary incident type of "assault" includes the following secondary incident types: assault/battery, bullying, fight, hazing, homicide, mugging/robbery, and other.

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field trips. Offsite incidents also include those that occur while students are not participating in program-related activities, such as when they are at home during breaks.

In some cases, the incident categories in SIRS are related to the specific infractions defined in the Policy and Requirements Handbook, which are classified according to their level of severity. Level I infractions are the most serious, and include such incidents as arrest for a felony or violent misdemeanor or possession of a weapon, and are required to be reported in SIRS. Level II infractions include such incidents as possession of a potentially dangerous item like a box cutter, or arrest for a non-violent misdemeanor. The majority of these infractions are required to be reported in SIRS. Minor infractions—the lowest level of infractions—include failure to follow center rules, and are not required to be reported in SIRS.

Within the Policy and Requirements Handbook, ETA establishes a Zero Tolerance Policy, which specifies actions that centers must take in response to certain incidents. ETA implemented changes to this policy effective on July 1, 2016, which impacted the categorization and number of reportable incidents.<sup>12</sup> Under the prior Zero Tolerance Policy, there were fewer infractions categorized as Level I, which are the most severe and result in termination from the program.<sup>13</sup> The July 2016 policy changes broadened the types of infractions categorized as Level I. For example, ETA elevated several infractions previously classified as Level II to Level I, and added several new categories of reportable incidents. According to ETA officials, they made these changes to reflect a heightened emphasis on student safety.

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**Job Corps Student  
Satisfaction Survey**

ETA currently surveys all students enrolled in Job Corps on in March and September each year to collect information on a variety of topics, including their perceptions of safety at Job Corps centers. The current

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<sup>12</sup>This policy change was effective on July 1, 2016, but ETA added several new incident categories in SIRS prior to this date. As a result, the data we report through June 30, 2016 includes some data for these new categories. However, centers were not required to officially report data in these new categories until July 1, 2016. For more information on these new incident categories, see appendix I.

<sup>13</sup>The Policy and Requirements Handbook states that centers are to conduct investigations and recommend appropriate sanctions, and that they must also have an appeals process for students.

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student survey contains 49 questions on various aspects of the Job Corps program, including career development services, interactions between students and staff, access to alcohol and drugs, and overall satisfaction with the program. The survey includes 12 questions on students' perceptions of safety at centers. ETA has been conducting this survey since 2002, and in recent years has administered it twice a year.<sup>14</sup> ETA officials told us they plan to survey students more frequently beginning in July 2017. Specifically, they plan to survey students on a monthly basis regarding their perceptions of safety, and on a quarterly basis regarding their overall satisfaction with the program. ETA uses the responses to the safety-related survey questions to calculate a center safety rating, which represents the percentage of Job Corps students who report feeling safe at each center, as well as a national safety rating, which represents the percentage of Job Corps students who report feeling safe nationwide.

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<sup>14</sup>ETA has administered the survey twice a year since 2009. In 2008, ETA administered the survey three times. Between 2002 and 2008, ETA administered the survey four times a year.

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**Job Corps Centers  
Reported a Variety of  
Types of Incidents  
between January  
2007 and June 2016,  
Many of Which  
Occurred Onsite**

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**The Most Common Types  
of Reported Onsite and  
Offsite Incidents Included  
Serious Illnesses or  
Injuries, Assaults, and  
Drug-Related Incidents**

Our preliminary analysis of ETA's SIRS data shows that Job Corps centers reported 49,836 safety and security incidents, including those that occurred both onsite and offsite, from January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2016.<sup>15</sup> During this time period, approximately 539,000 students were enrolled in the program, according to ETA officials. Three types of incidents represented 60 percent of all reported incidents: serious illnesses or injuries (28 percent),<sup>16</sup> assaults (19 percent),<sup>17</sup> and drug-related incidents (13 percent). The remaining 40 percent of reported incidents included theft or damage to center, staff, or student property (12 percent), breaches of security or safety (6 percent), and all other types of incidents (22 percent). During this time period, Job Corps centers reported 265 deaths,<sup>18</sup> including 61 deaths that occurred onsite and 204

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<sup>15</sup>To calculate the total number and types of incidents overall, we analyzed the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident reported in SIRS.

<sup>16</sup>According to ETA documentation, the serious illness and injury category includes injury, illness, or disease that is serious or widespread among students and/or staff (e.g., communicable disease outbreak, reaction to medication/immunization, emergency surgery, hospitalization, emergency room treatment, etc.). Incidents which require medical treatment due to the physical effects of drug or alcohol use (drug overdose, alcohol poisoning, etc.) are included in this category.

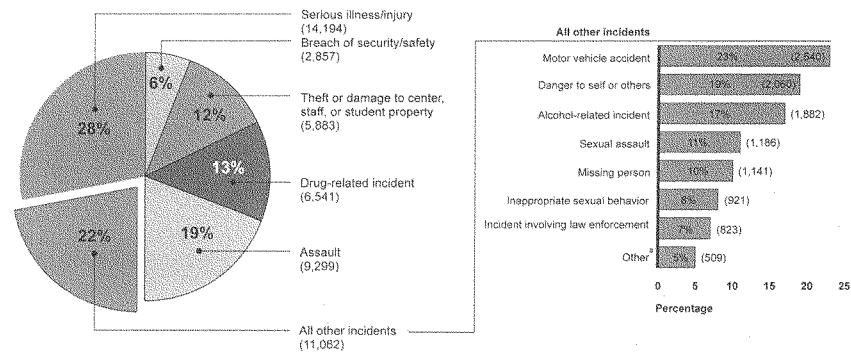
<sup>17</sup>The assault category does not include sexual assaults, which are captured in a separate category.

<sup>18</sup>To calculate the total number and types of deaths, we analyzed both primary incident types and secondary incident types. In SIRS, deaths can be reported under three different primary incident types ("death," "assault," and "danger to self or others"). When an incident is assigned any of these primary incident types, it may also be assigned a secondary incident type of "homicide," among other secondary incident types. The 265 deaths reported in SIRS during this time period include 246 deaths with a primary incident type of "death," and 19 deaths with a primary incident type of "assault" and a secondary incident type of "homicide." During this time period, there were no deaths reported with a primary incident type of "danger to self or others" and a secondary incident type of "homicide."



that occurred offsite. Most of these reported deaths were homicides (25 percent),<sup>19</sup> due to medical causes (23 percent), and due to accidental causes (22 percent).<sup>20</sup> In figure 1 below, 246 of these deaths are captured in the "Other" category, and 19 of these deaths are captured in the "Assault" category.

**Figure 1: Types of Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers, January 1, 2007 – June 30, 2016**



Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-17-596T

Note: The figure includes incidents that were reported in the Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) database and shows the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident.

<sup>19</sup>"Other" consists of the following types of incidents, which each represent less than 1 percent of all incidents: arrest, death, hospitalization, incident involving a missing minor student, incident attracting potentially negative media attention, incident involving illegal activity (that is not covered in any of the

<sup>19</sup>The 65 homicides reported in SIRS during this time period include 46 homicides with a primary incident type of "death" and a secondary incident type of "homicide," and 19 homicides with a primary incident type of "assault" and a secondary incident type of "homicide."

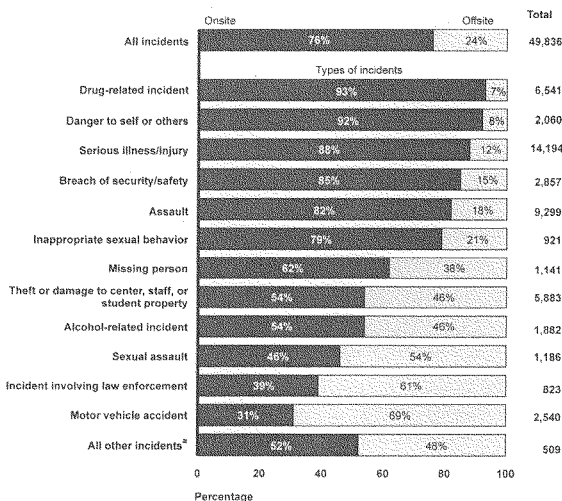
<sup>20</sup>The remaining 30 percent of deaths were due to unknown causes (13 percent), suicides (11 percent), and other causes (6 percent). ETA officials told us that deaths are categorized as being due to unknown causes based on the coroner's assessment that the cause of death is unknown. Officials said that deaths are categorized as being due to other causes when the cause of death is known, but it is not covered by any of the other categories.

other categories), incident threatening to close down center/disrupt center operations, miscellaneous, and safety/hazmat.

### Most Reported Incidents Occurred Onsite at Job Corps Centers, but the Majority of Reported Deaths Occurred Offsite

Our preliminary analysis showed that from January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2016, 76 percent of the reported safety and security incidents occurred onsite at Job Corps centers, and 24 percent occurred at offsite locations (see fig. 2). While most reported incidents occurred onsite, our preliminary analysis showed that the majority of reported deaths occurred offsite. During this time period, of the 265 reported deaths, 77 percent occurred offsite, and 23 percent occurred onsite. The vast majority of homicides reported during this time period occurred offsite, and very few occurred onsite. Of 65 reported homicides, 61 occurred at offsite locations and 4 occurred onsite.

Figure 2: Type and Location of Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers, January 1, 2007 – June 30, 2016



Sources: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-17-596T

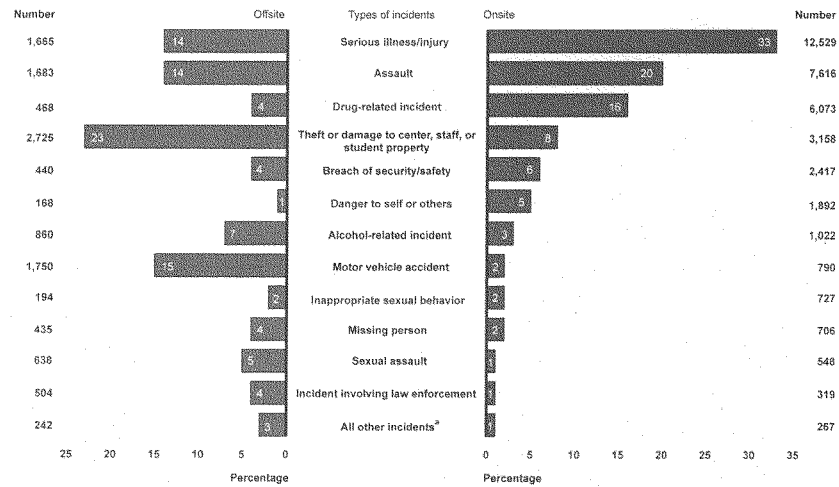
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Note: The figure includes incidents that were reported in the Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) database and shows the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident.

"All other incidents" consists of the following types of incidents, which each represent less than 1 percent of all incidents: arrest, death, hospitalization, incident involving a missing minor student, incident attracting potentially negative media attention, incident involving illegal activity (that is not covered in any of the other categories), incident threatening to close down center/disrupt center operations, miscellaneous, and safety/hazmat.

During this time period, the most common types of reported onsite incidents were generally different from the most common types of reported offsite incidents, although reported assaults were common in both locations. The most common types of reported onsite incidents were the same as the most common types of incidents overall: serious illnesses or injuries (33 percent), assaults (20 percent), and drug-related incidents (16 percent). Of all reported offsite incidents, the most common types were thefts or damage to center, staff, or student property (23 percent), motor vehicle accidents (15 percent), assaults (14 percent), and serious illnesses or injuries (14 percent) (see fig.3).

Figure 3: Types of Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers, January 1, 2007 – June 30, 2016



Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-17-596T

Note: The figure includes incidents that were reported in the Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) database and shows the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident.

<sup>a</sup>All other incidents<sup>a</sup> consists of the following types of incidents, which each represent less than 1 percent of all incidents: arrest, death, hospitalization, incident involving a missing minor student, incident attracting potentially negative media attention, incident involving illegal activity (that is not covered in any of the other categories), incident threatening to close down center/disrupt center operations, miscellaneous, and safety/hazmat.

**Most Reported Onsite and Offsite Violent Incidents Involved Job Corps Students, and Considerably Fewer Involved Program Staff**

Our preliminary analysis showed that from January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2016, most reported violent incidents—specifically assaults, homicides, and sexual assaults that occurred both onsite and offsite—involved Job Corps students, and considerably fewer of these incidents involved program staff.<sup>21</sup> During this time period, Job Corps centers reported 10,531 violent incidents, which represented 21 percent of all reported onsite and offsite incidents. Students were victims in 72 percent of these reported violent incidents, while staff were victims in 8 percent of these incidents. Similarly, students were perpetrators in 85 percent of these reported violent incidents, while staff were perpetrators in 1 percent of these incidents (see table 1).<sup>22</sup> Each of these reported violent incidents involved at least one victim or perpetrator who was a Job Corps student or staff member, but some of these incidents also involved victims or perpetrators who were not associated with the Job Corps program.

**Table 1: Number and Percentage of Reported Onsite and Offsite Violent Incidents with Student Victims and Perpetrators, and Staff Victims and Perpetrators, January 1, 2007 – June 30, 2016**

	Total number of reported incidents	Reported incidents involving students		Reported incidents involving staff	
		Victims (number and percentage of incidents) <sup>a</sup>	Perpetrators (number and percentage of incidents) <sup>a</sup>	Victims (number and percentage of incidents) <sup>a</sup>	Perpetrators (number and percentage of incidents) <sup>a</sup>
Assaults	9,280 <sup>b</sup>	6,459 (70)	8,153 (88)	781 (8)	119 (1)
Homicides	65 <sup>b</sup>	41 (63)	23 (35)	5 (8)	0 (0)
Sexual Assaults	1,186	1,061 (90)	723 (62)	2 (<1)	15 (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,531</b>	<b>7,561 (72)</b>	<b>8,899 (85)</b>	<b>788 (8)</b>	<b>134 (1)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-17-596T

Note: The table includes incidents that were reported in the Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) database.

<sup>a</sup>Percentages do not total 100 percent because some incidents had multiple victims or perpetrators, and some incidents involved victims or perpetrators who were not Job Corps students or staff. For the purposes of this analysis, we only included students who were enrolled in the program. We did not include former students, applicants who had not yet enrolled in the program, or students who were on medical leave from the program.

<sup>21</sup>For the purposes of this statement, we defined violent incidents to include assaults, sexual assaults, and deaths that Job Corps centers categorized as homicides in SIRS. ETA officials told us that Job Corps centers categorize deaths as homicides based on a determination by law enforcement.

<sup>22</sup>For the purposes of this analysis, we only included students who were enrolled in the program. We did not include former students, applicants who had not yet enrolled in the program, or students who were on medical leave from the program.

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<sup>23</sup>Overall, there were 9,299 reported incidents with a primary incident type of "assault." However, 19 of these assaults were assigned a secondary incident type of "homicide." For the purposes of this analysis of violent incidents, we categorized these 19 assaults as homicides.

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**Students Generally  
Reported Feeling Safe,  
but Reported Feeling Less  
Safe on Certain Safety  
and Security Issues**

Our preliminary analysis of ETA's student satisfaction survey data from March 2007 to March 2017 showed that while students generally reported feeling safe at Job Corps centers, they reported feeling less safe on certain safety and security issues.<sup>23</sup> Overall, across all 12 of the safety-related survey questions, an average of 72 percent of students reported feeling safe during this time period.<sup>24</sup> However, the average percentage of students who reported feeling safe on each individual survey question ranged from 44 percent to 91 percent. For 7 of the 12 questions, student responses were above the 72 percent average, which indicates students felt more safe; however, for 5 of the questions, student responses were below the average, which indicates students felt less safe (see table 2). For example, an average of 44 percent of students reported that they had never heard students threaten each other, or had not heard such threats within the last month. The remaining 56 percent of students, on average, reported hearing such threats at least once in the last month.

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<sup>23</sup>Over this time period, ETA conducted 24 surveys of all students enrolled in Job Corps on a biannual or more frequent basis. From March 2009 to March 2017, ETA conducted this survey biannually in March and September. In 2008, ETA conducted this survey in March, June, and September. In 2007, ETA conducted this survey in March, June, September, and December. From March 2007 to March 2017, the average overall response rate was 88 percent, and ranged from 85 percent to 92 percent. The average response rate for the 12 safety-related questions was 83 percent, and ranged from 80 percent to 86 percent.

<sup>24</sup>We calculated the average percentage of students who reported feeling safe across all 12 questions by calculating the average percentage who reported feeling safe on each individual question, and then calculating the average of those 12 percentages. ETA considers students to feel safe if they provide certain responses to each of the 12 safety-related survey questions, some of which are phrased as statements. For example, if a student provided a response of "mostly false" or "very false" to the statement "I thought about leaving Job Corps because of a personal safety concern," that student would be counted as feeling safe on that survey question.

**Table 2: Average Percentage of Job Corps Students Who Reported Feeling Safe on Each Safety-Related Survey Question, March 2007 to March 2017**

Survey Question <sup>a</sup>	Response(s) Indicating That Students Feel Safe <sup>b</sup>	Average Percentage of Students Who Reported Feeling Safe <sup>c</sup>
<b>Seven questions on which students reported feeling more safe (above the average of 72 percent across all 12 safety-related questions)</b>		
How often did you carry a weapon—like a knife, club, or sharp object—with you on center?	Never or Not in the Last Month	91
How often were you in a physical fight with a student on center?	Never or Not in the Last Month	89
A student would be terminated if he/she was found with a weapon—like a knife, club, or sharp object—on center.	Very True or Mostly True	83
I thought about going to a different Job Corps center because I felt threatened by other students.	Mostly False or Very False	80
I could talk to my residential advisor if I was threatened by another student.	Very True or Mostly True	76
How often did other students pick on you even after you asked them to stop?	Never or Not in the Last Month	76
I could talk to my counselor if I was threatened by another student.	Very True or Mostly True	74
<b>Five questions on which students reported feeling less safe (below the average of 72 percent across all 12 safety-related questions)</b>		
How often did other students say things to make you feel like you are not important?	Never or Not in the Last Month	68
I thought about leaving Job Corps because of a personal safety concern.	Mostly False or Very False	65
How often did you see a physical fight between students on center?	Never or Not in the Last Month	63
The zero tolerance policy was applied equally to all students.	Very True or Mostly True	62
How often did you hear a student threaten another student on center?	Never or Not in the Last Month	44

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-17-596T

<sup>a</sup>The survey asks students to answer the questions for the time period of the last month. For example, the survey asks students how often they carried a weapon with them at the center in the last month.

<sup>b</sup>According to ETA documentation, these are the survey responses that ETA considers to indicate that students feel safe.

<sup>c</sup>This represents the average percentage of students who reported feeling safe on each safety-related survey question over the 24 administrations of the survey conducted between March 2007 and March 2017. We rounded the average percentages to the nearest whole number. For each of these average percentages, the minimum and maximum percentages on each question were no more than +/- 10 percentage points of the average.

ETA uses students' responses to the safety-related survey questions to calculate a safety rating for each Job Corps center and a national safety rating for the program overall. According to ETA officials, the center safety rating represents the percentage of students who report feeling

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safe at a center, and the national safety rating represents the percentage of students who report feeling safe nationwide. Throughout the period of March 2007 through March 2017, the national safety rating remained above 82 percent, according to ETA data. ETA officials said they use these ratings as management tools to assess students' perceptions of safety at individual centers and nationwide, and to determine whether ETA needs to act upon these results to better address students' safety and security concerns.

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Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee, this concludes my prepared remarks. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

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## GAO Contact and Acknowledgments

For further information regarding this testimony, please contact Cindy Brown Barnes at (202) 512-7215 or [brownbarnesc@gao.gov](mailto:brownbarnesc@gao.gov). Contact points of our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this statement. Individuals who made key contributions to this testimony include Mary Crenshaw (Assistant Director), Caitlin Croake (Analyst in Charge), David Chrisinger, Alexander Galuten, LaToya Jeanita King, Rebecca Kuhlmann Taylor, Grant Mallie, Sheila McCoy, Meredith Moore, Mimi Nguyen, Lorin Obler, Matthew Saradjian, Monica Savoy, Almeta Spencer, Amy Sweet, Walter Vance, Kathleen van Gelder, and Ashanta Williams.



## Appendix I. Categories of Incidents in the Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS)

Table 3. Categories of Incidents in the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) and Related Definitions, as of December 2016

SIRS Incident Category	ETA's Definition
Alcohol-related Incident	An incident involving the discovery of alcohol on center, or involving any student found in possession of alcohol or charged by local law enforcement agencies with illegal alcohol consumption or possession. Incidents which require medical treatment due to the physical effects of drug use (alcohol poisoning, etc.) should be reported under the "Medical Incident" Primary Incident Code.
Arrest <sup>a</sup>	This code applies when a student is arrested for an incident that occurred prior to his/her enrollment in Job Corps.
Assault	These are acts that are commonly known as assault, battery, or mugging; any assault with a weapon or object; or any altercation resulting in medical treatment for injuries. Mugging (robbery) is included in this category because it pertains more to an assault upon a person than on property. Homicide has been removed as a Primary Incident Code and is now listed under Assault as a Secondary Incident Code.
Breach of Security/Safety	This code applies to any incidents that threaten the security and safety of center students, staff, and property which may result in injury, illness, fatality, and/or property damage. Examples include arson, bomb threat, gang-related incidents, possession of gun, possession of an illegal weapon, unauthorized access to center buildings, grounds, or restricted areas, and verbal threats.
Danger to Self or Others <sup>a</sup>	Attempted suicide is a deliberate action by student to self-inflict bodily harm in an attempt to kill one's self. Centers need only report a suicide threat (suicidal ideation) if it results in evaluation by a physician or mental health consultant.
Death	Centers must report the death of any student who is enrolled in Job Corps regardless of his/her duty status. Centers are only required to report the death of a staff member if the death occurs while on duty, either on center or off center.
Drug-Related Incident	Incidents involving any student or staff found in possession of or charged by local law enforcement agencies with a drug offense (e.g. the illegal use, possession, or distribution of a controlled substance), or the discovery of drugs on center. Incidents which require medical treatment due to the physical effects of drug use (overdose, etc.) should be reported under the "Medical Incident" Primary Incident Code.
Hospitalization <sup>a</sup>	ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) Technical Guide does not provide a definition of this category.
Inappropriate Sexual Behavior	Sexual misconduct includes the intentional touching, molesting, or feeling of the body or private parts of any person without the consent of that person. Sexual harassment or unsolicited offensive behavior such as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature is also included.
Incident Attracting Potentially Negative Media Attention <sup>a</sup>	ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) Technical Guide does not provide a definition of this category.
Incident Involving Law Enforcement Involvement <sup>a</sup>	ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) Technical Guide does not provide a definition of this category.
Incident Involving a Missing Minor Student <sup>a</sup>	ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) Technical Guide does not provide a definition of this category.
Incident Involving Illegal Activity (Not Covered By Other Categories) <sup>a</sup>	ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) Technical Guide does not provide a definition of this category.

**Appendix I. Categories of Incidents in the  
Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS)**

<b>SIRS Incident Category</b>	<b>ETA's Definition</b>
Incident Threatening to Close Down Center/Disrupt Center Operations <sup>a</sup>	ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) Technical Guide does not provide a definition of this category.
Missing Person	ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) Technical Guide does not provide a definition of this category.
Motor Vehicle Accident	Motor vehicle accidents involving any Job Corps student, on duty staff member, and/or center-owned vehicle should be reported using this code. Incidents in which a pedestrian is struck by a motor vehicle should be reported under the "Medical Incident" Primary Incident Code.
Safety/Hazmat	Safety/Hazmat are incidents involving hazardous materials/chemicals in any solid, liquid, or gas form that can cause harm to humans, plants, animals, property, or the environment. A hazardous material can be radiological, explosive, toxic, corrosive, biohazard, an oxidizer, an asphyxiant or have other characteristics that render it hazardous in specific circumstances. Hazmat/toxic-mercury, gasoline, asbestos, lead, used syringe, blood Hazmat/non-toxic-water, oxygen (can become hazardous under specific circumstances)
Serious Illness/Injury <sup>a</sup>	Medical incidents include any diagnosis of injury, illness, or disease which is serious or widespread among students and/or staff, (e.g. communicable disease outbreak, reaction to medication/immunization, emergency surgery, hospitalization, emergency room treatment, etc.). Incidents which require medical treatment due to the physical effects of drug and/or alcohol use (drug overdose, alcohol poisoning, etc.) should be included in this category.
Sexual Assault	Sexual assault includes any alleged non-consenting sexual act involving forceful physical contact including attempted rape, rape, sodomy, and others. If forceful physical contact is not used, the incident should be reported as a Sexual Misconduct.
Theft or Damage to Center, Staff or Student Property	Property incidents are any incident by students or staff that involve the destruction, theft, or attempted theft of property; this includes but is not limited to automobile theft, burglary, vandalism, and shoplifting. If any type of force is used against another person, the incident is to be reported under the "Assault" Primary Incident Code. Property incidents also include natural occurrences/disasters or any other incident threatening to close down the center or disrupting the center's operation (e.g. hurricane, flooding, earthquake, water main break, power failure, fire, etc.).

Source: Employment and Training Administration (ETA) documentation. | GAO-17-596T

<sup>a</sup>These incident categories were added to SIRS in June 2016. Some of these new categories previously existed in SIRS, but were renamed in June 2016. Others were entirely new categories as of June 2016. Centers were not required to officially report data in these new categories until July 1, 2016.



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Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you Ms. Barnes.  
Mr. Barton, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF JEFFREY BARTON, CENTER DIRECTOR, EARLE C. CLEMENTS JOB CORPS ACADEMY, MORGANFIELD, KY**

Mr. BARTON. Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Scott and members of the committee for inviting me to testify about the Job Corps program. I'm honored to have the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion about how we can strengthen and improve Job Corps, particularly as it relates to the safety and security of the students entrusted into our care.

I cannot sufficiently express how serious student safety is to me and my colleagues across the Job Corps system. We are educators, counselors, mentors. But the most important role I've taken on in my professional life is caretaker to someone else's children and to your constituents.

I have over 25 years of experience in Job Corps in multiple capacities, including having served as center director at three centers. I also served as a police officer in nearby Loudoun County, Virginia, which exposed me to the challenges of policing violence in criminal activity.

I currently serve as the academy director of the Earle C. Clements Job Corps center in Morganfield, Kentucky. And today over 700 students from 29 States, including nearly 100 students from the districts of 13 members of this committee, are receiving training at my center.

My center exemplifies the founding premise of Job Corps, that taking vulnerable youth out of challenging home circumstances and providing them with safe and secure living and learning environment will help them become employable. The Clements academy offers our students, the majority of whom dropped out or were kicked out of school, multiple options for completing their high school education.

Our center also offers training in 19 occupations, including nursing and welding, and the opportunity to earn any of hundreds of industry recognized credentials. This year 95 percent of my vocational students have earned an industry recognized credential. And 91 percent of my graduates transitioned into employment or higher education.

Based on my experience, I can tell you that these successes are predicated on providing a safe and secure environment for our students to live and learn. The entire Job Corps community was shocked by the tragic incidents that occurred in Job Corps 2 years ago, because those were our students. We work hard to prevent such events.

Over the course of my career the 3 days which I received phone calls that one of my students had passed as a result of medical issues were among the worst days of my life. Preserving and protecting the lives of these students is not an abstract concept to me. I know them, I know their families. I know their hopes and I know their dreams. And to see those taken for any reason is heart-breaking.

These two tragedies are not representative of Job Corps' overall safety record. And in fact, based on data from the last 4 years, Job

Corps students were 15 times safer, on Job Corps campuses, than their peers, including their nondisadvantaged peers nationally.

Nonetheless, these incidents necessitated a reevaluation from top to bottom of whether we were doing everything we can to protect our students. As a result of that review, Job Corps has taken multiple actions, including updating the zero tolerance policy, clarifying when to call law enforcement, updating and enhancing center security plans, implementing new procedures for reporting significant incidents, and introducing new hotlines for students to anonymously report safety concerns.

Unfortunately, we cannot completely shield our students from violence, substance abuse or mental health disorders given the population that we serve and the communities from which they often come. Our students often tell us stories about how they enrolled in Job Corps to escape gangs, unstable home life, or an unsafe community. And every single holiday break, I receive calls from students asking if they can return to Job Corps early because they are concerned about violence in their community, the temptation or peer pressure to use drugs or for their own safety. For many of our students our center is a refuge.

Nationally there are 4.9 million young Americans age 16 to 24 who are neither employed nor enrolled in school, yet employers frequently report they cannot find the workers they need. The bottom line is we need these young people to gain the skills they need to participate in the workforce and many of these young people need Job Corps to be successful. Ensuring these students' safety and security is critical to that success so we will continue to be vigilant and to improve.

And I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this discussion and look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Barton follows:]

**Written Testimony of Jeff Barton, Academy Director of the Earle C. Clements Job Corps Academy in Morganfield, KY**

Thank you Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the Committee, for inviting me to testify about the Job Corps program. I am honored to have the opportunity to participate in and contribute to this important discussion about how we can strengthen and improve Job Corps, particularly as it relates to the safety and security of the students entrusted into our care. I cannot sufficiently express how serious student safety is to me and my colleagues across the Job Corps system. We are educators, counselors, disciplinarians, mentors, but the most important role we play is caretaker of someone else's child.

My career in Job Corps, began in 1992 as a counselor at the South Bronx Job Corps Center in New York City. Over my six-year tenure there, I served in many roles – Academic Manager, Vocational Manager, Residential Manager and Manager of Administration. That experience exposed me to the range of Job Corps' responsibilities as well as the varied challenges the program faces with respect to mental health obstacles, educating students who may range from illiterate to high school graduates, and organizing and supervising recreational activities during the other 16 hours outside the students' workday.

In 1998, I left Job Corps to enroll in the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Academy and served as a Police Officer for the Leesburg Police Department in nearby Loudoun County, Virginia. I saw firsthand the myriad challenges our law enforcement agencies and communities across the nation are facing with respect to drug addiction, violence, gang activity, and mental health. These experiences also exposed me to the resource limitations our law enforcement agencies face and the choices they have to make with respect to policing. In addition to my community policing and general patrol duties, I had the opportunity to serve as a School Resource Officer for the middle school and assisted in a high school in Loudoun County. While serving in the middle school, I taught a weekly course to the students pertaining to interaction with law enforcement as well as the problems associated with drug use.

I took these experiences and lessons with me when I returned to Job Corps. I was drawn back by the program's unique mission to help our nation's most at-risk young adults who would otherwise be left with few or no other options. I know I speak for my management team and many of my colleagues across the nation when I say that Job Corps is not just a job for us – it is a mission and calling to which we are devoted. After returning to the community, I eventually served for four years as the Center Director of the Whitney M. Young Job Corps Center located in Simpsonville, Kentucky and for six years as Center Director of the Potomac Job Corps Center here in Washington, D.C.. I am currently the Academy Director of the Earle C. Clements Job Corps Academy in Morganfield, Kentucky, a role which I have now held for seven years.

The Earle C. Clements Job Corps Academy is the nation's second largest Job Corps Center. Currently, over 700 students from 29 States, including nearly 100 students from the districts of 13 members of this committee, reside at my center. In that way, the Earle C. Clements Academy exemplifies the founding premise of Job Corps – that taking vulnerable youth out of difficult or unsupportive home environments and providing them a safe, secure, and supportive living and learning environment will help them unlock their potential.

Like most centers, the Clements Academy offers our students - the majority of whom dropped out or were kicked out of school - multiple options for completing their high school education. Our center also offers these students training in 19 occupations, including automotive repair, computer technician, nursing and welding, and offers students the opportunity to earn any of over 700 different industry-recognized credentials. As required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, our offerings and curricula are informed by our Industry Council which includes our local Chamber of Commerce, River View Coal, Morganfield Nursing and Rehab, Ingram Barge, Century Aluminum and others. These employers also work with us to offer work-based learning opportunities, or the opportunity to earn and learn with employers in our community.

Our students are also able to co-enroll in college through partnerships with our local colleges including Henderson Community College and Ivy Tech Community College. These college partnerships leverage our great success with remedial education, with which community colleges generally struggle, to ease the transition to college. The average Job Corps enrollee enters the program with schooling below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level but advances the equivalent of 2.5 grade levels after less than a year in Job Corps.<sup>i</sup> Nationally, through initiatives by both the National Job Corps Association and the National Office of Job Corps, Job Corps has begun to expand such college partnerships. Our goal is for our students who earn postsecondary certifications in Job Corps to receive the same college credit that they would earn if they completed the certification at a college. By 2020, 65 percent of jobs will require some postsecondary education and we want our students to be prepared for those jobs.<sup>ii</sup>

I am proud to say that during my tenure as the Academy Director of the Earle C. Clements Job Corps Academy, the center's performance has improved significantly across the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's primary measures of performance. Today, in the areas of high school completion and credential attainment as well as at placing students in the occupations for which we train them, the Clements Academy is among the highest ranked centers. So far this program year, 95 percent of my vocational students have earned a primary industry-recognized credential.



These successes are predicated on providing a safe and secure environment for our students to live and learn. Safety and security are the foundation of our program. The most important role I have taken on in my professional life is caretaker to someone else's children and to your constituents. Over the course of my 25 year career, the three days in which I received phone calls that one of my students had passed – all as a result of medical incidents – were among the worst days of my life. Preserving and protecting the lives of these students is not an abstract concept to me. I know them, I know their families, I know their hopes, and I know their dreams. And to see those taken, whether by violence, drugs, depression, an accident, or a medical incident, is heartbreaking.

Unfortunately, we are not immune to violence, substance abuse, depression or other mental health disorders – far from it, given the population that we serve and the communities from which they often come. Our students regularly tell us stories about how they enrolled in Job Corps to escape gangs, an unstable home life, or an unsafe community that made it impossible to pursue their education and career goals. Unlike most schools, Job Corps operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every week of the year except for a short winter break over the holidays, during which students return home. Every single holiday break, I receive calls from students asking if they can return to the Job Corps center early because they are concerned about violence in their community, the temptation or peer pressure to use drugs, or their own safety. For many of our students, our centers are a refuge.

That is why the entire Job Corps community was shocked and horrified by the incidents at the St. Louis and Homestead Job Corps Centers. We were horrified not just because of the tragedy and heinousness of the crimes, but because those were our students – those could have been my students. We were shocked, because we work hard and, for the most part successfully, to prevent such incidents. The national mortality rate for 16-24 year olds between 2012 and 2015 was 70.88 per 100,000, while the comparable rate on Job Corps centers was 4.7.<sup>iii</sup> That means Job Corps students were 15 times safer on Job Corps campuses than their peers, including their non-disadvantaged peers, nationally.<sup>iv</sup> While these two tragedies are not representative of Job Corps' overall record with respect to safety, they nonetheless necessitated a reevaluation of whether we are doing everything we can to protect our students.

In the aftermath of these awful incidents everyone in the Job Corps community – from our National Director, our operators, the National Job Corp Association, and, of course, each individual Center Director – resolved to review our policies, our practices, and our campuses to identify any gaps. Fortunately, our center, like most centers, has a very strong relationship with our local law enforcement agency which has assisted us in conducting these assessments. At the Clements Academy, we have had local law enforcement conduct a security assessment, provided active threat training for all staff and students, begun instituting a text alert system

for all staff and students, and conducted more frequent canine sweeps of the dormitories to further deter drug possession. The National Office made clear that this was a priority by conducting announced safety inspections at centers nationwide. On June 1, 2016, in response to feedback from Center Directors, the National Job Corps Association, and the Office of the Inspector General, the National Office of Job Corps introduced a new, stricter zero tolerance policy that removed ambiguities in the previous policy, particularly related to how violent behavior should be classified. Job Corps has also introduced new hotlines for students to anonymously report safety concerns or illegal behavior. Across the board, we have increased our expectations of students and our staff with respect to safety and security.

Having said that, we must not lose sight of the challenges that the population we serve brings to the table. A quarter of our students have a disclosed disability, mostly cognitive disabilities, and many more come to us with undiagnosed disabilities that may lead to behavioral issues.<sup>v</sup> Many, if not most, students also come to our centers having previously learned behaviors that are counterproductive for the classroom and the workplace. These maladaptive behaviors are often the reason they did not succeed in traditional classrooms and schools. We see this play out in Job Corps as well. More than 1 in 4 Job Corps students are currently expelled from the program in accordance with our zero tolerance policy – an increase of more than 25 percent compared to historical averages under the previous policy.<sup>vi</sup>

Maintaining the safety and security of our centers is of paramount importance, so we will remain vigilant in enforcing the zero tolerance policy. We simultaneously strive to minimize the number of students that violate that policy and must be expelled, because we are successful with the students that we keep – of those who are not expelled, 4 in 5 complete their studies and graduate from the program.<sup>vii</sup> With that goal in mind, the Job Corps community recommended to the National Office that we review our admissions practices. In particular, we recommended returning authority to admissions counselors to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's requirement to ascertain whether an applicant's needs can be best met through Job Corps or another program. Our understanding is that the National Office of Job Corps is preparing to introduce new standards with respect to those policies and practices.

We are also continuously working to strengthen our behavioral management systems in order to mitigate violent behavior once students are enrolled. At the Clements Academy, we utilize positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS) that emphasize preventing problem behaviors before they happen. Research has shown that utilizing PBIS significantly reduces the number of students involved in major or minor disciplinary events.<sup>viii</sup> I also understand that the National Job Corps Association, in conjunction with the Arnold Foundation and researchers from Harvard University, Princeton University, and the University of Pennsylvania are working

to test the use of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) strategies to address maladaptive behaviors and reduce disciplinary infractions at Job Corps centers. These CBT strategies previously proved successful at reducing arrests for violent crimes by 44 percent, overall arrests by 36 percent, and improving graduation rates by 7-22 percent among at-risk young males, when implemented by the Becoming a Man program in Chicago.<sup>ix</sup>

Nationally, there are 4.9 million young Americans age 16-24 who are neither employed nor enrolled in school.<sup>x</sup> If not for Job Corps, many of these young people would have no other effective options in their communities. The costs of ignoring this population are enormous; according to some estimates, they could cost the American economy and taxpayers as much as \$5 trillion over the course of their lifetimes.<sup>xi</sup> A long-term evaluation of Job Corps found it to be the first program to demonstrate long-term impacts on earnings for this population.<sup>xii</sup> In the 20 years since that study was conducted, the program has continued to improve.

The President has said that “We want to make sure that we have the workforce development programs we need to ensure these jobs are being filled by American workers.”<sup>xiii</sup> Last year, more than 70 percent of Job Corps students left with an industry-recognized credential.<sup>xiv</sup> 86 percent of Job Corps graduates secured jobs, enlisted in the military, or enrolled in higher education.<sup>xv</sup> Job Corps is one of the workforce development programs the United States and these youth need. For that reason, the Job Corps community will always strive to do better for our students, our employers, our communities, and taxpayers.

Hearings like this one are important to that cycle of continuous improvement. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute the study of this essential workforce development program and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

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<sup>i</sup> Outcome Measurement System Center Report Card (OMS-10); Report Period: 7/1/2015 – 6/30/2016. U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved February 13, 2017 from

[http://www.jobcorps.gov/Libraries/Annual%20Reports/OMS10\\_2016.sflb](http://www.jobcorps.gov/Libraries/Annual%20Reports/OMS10_2016.sflb)

<sup>ii</sup> Carnevale, Anthony, Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl (2014). *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Retrieved on June 19, 2017 from [https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES\\_Web.pdf](https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES_Web.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> Based on comparison of Job Corps on-center mortality rates to national mortality rates for 16- to 24-year-old youth nationally, 2012 to 2015. Job Corps enrollment and student mortality data provided by the National Office of Job Corps. National 16- to 24-year-old youth mortality data taken from CDC WONDER Online Database.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> National Office of Job Corps. (November, 2015). Job Corps Health and Wellness Report: Review of Selected Health Indicators Program Year 2014. U.S. Department of Labor.

<sup>vi</sup> Job Corps Executive Information System. Separations by Type, Program Year 2016.

<sup>vii</sup> Data taken from Job Corps Executive Information System. [Calculation: (PY 2015 graduates)/(PY 2015 separations – PY 2015 disciplinary separations)].

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- <sup>xv</sup> Ibid

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you, Mr. Barton.  
Mr. Turner, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF LARRY TURNER, DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. TURNER. Good morning Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Scott and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for an opportunity to discuss the Office of Inspector General's oversight work of the Department of Labor's Job Corp program.

My testimony today will focus on issues related to the safety and security of Job Corps students. In 2015 two students were killed at different Job Corps centers, allegedly by fellow students. While the two murders put a spotlight on the issue of violence in the Job Corp program, OIG has been reporting for the past 8 years on the challenges that Job Corps faces in providing a safe, learning environment. From 2009 through 2015 a series of audits covering 24 centers reveal serious problems with how student misconduct had been addressed.

Unfortunately, student misconduct is not uncommon at Job Corps centers. During the 2-year period covered by our 2015 audit, there were 35,000 serious student misconduct incidents reported across Job Corps' 129 centers. This series of audits found centers' operators too often allow potentially dangerous students to remain in the program despite behavior that should have resulted in their dismissal. Specifically we found centers did not consistently investigate and adjudicate alleged serious student misconduct such as physical assault, weapons possession and distribution of drugs.

Centers did not conduct many student disciplinary hearings in a timely manner. Centers failed to report many serious incidents to Job Corps. And centers inappropriately downgraded serious incidents to lesser infractions that did not require dismissal of the student.

For example, one center found a student in possession of illegal drugs on center property. Instead of charging this student with violating Job Corps zero tolerance policy and terminating him from the program, the center opted to downgrade the offense to a lesser infraction. Seventy-four days later, this same student was dismissed after assaulting and injuring another student.

After the murders of the two Job Corps students in 2015, a team of OIG auditors and criminal investigators conducted a joint review to examine how Job Corps was identifying and managing risk to safety and security at its centers. Eleven of the 12 centers the team visited failed to report 40 percent of the potentially serious criminal misconduct incidents to law enforcement. Furthermore, these 12 centers also failed to report numerous significant incidences to Job Corps and misclassified many of the incidents they did report.

We also found one-third of Job Corps centers had not established cooperative agreements with law enforcement organizations. Of the centers with agreements, 85 percent failed to include adequate descriptions of center and law enforcement's roles and responsibilities.

During the site visits to the 12 centers, the team observed physical security weaknesses such as inadequate and unmonitored

closed circuit television systems, security staff shortages and compromised perimeters. Our review also found Job Corps required pre-employment background checks to very few center positions and had not defined criminal histories that would disqualify individuals from employment.

To address the problems identified by our audit, Job Corps has reported initiating numerous corrective actions such as establishing a division of regional operations and program integrity. In part to improve oversight of center safety. Revising a zero tolerance student conduct policy, developing tools to better assess applicant's readiness to benefit from Job Corps, rolling out a new criminal background check process for student applicants and conducting \$12 million security pallets at 14 centers.

The media's core mission of attracting at risk youth teaches them the skills they need to become employable and independent and placing them in meaningful jobs or further education, Job Corps must provide a safe learning environment for its students.

Since our last audit, Job Corps has taken numerous actions to make centers safer. Nonetheless, we continue to have a significant number of serious incidents reported to us. Therefore, Job Corps still has work to do. Job Corps needs to quickly complete the various safety initiatives it has recently begun. Further, Job Corps must be more vigilant in its monitoring to ensure center operatives fully enforce Job Corps zero tolerance policy.

Job Corps also needs to establish appropriate law enforcement jurisdiction and agreements for each center, assess campus physical security at all centers, and develop and implement policy for criminal background checks for center employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on our work. I would also like to publicly acknowledge the great work that the men and women of the Office of Inspector General do every day.

I would be pleased to answer any questions that you have and the members of the committee. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Turner follows:]

*U.S. Department of Labor  
Office of Inspector General*

## Congressional Testimony



**Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Education and the Workforce**

**"Student Safety in the Job Corps Program"**

**Testimony of Larry D. Turner  
Deputy Inspector General  
Office of Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Labor**

**June 22, 2017  
10:00 am**

Good morning, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Scott, and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) oversight work of the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Job Corps program. My testimony today will focus on challenges related to the safety and security of Job Corps students.

Each year, the Job Corps program provides residential and nonresidential education, training, and support services to more than 50,000 disadvantaged, at-risk youth, ages 16-24, at 129 Job Corps centers and satellite campuses in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. This \$1.7 billion program offers participants opportunities to complete training and secure academic and technical credentials and, upon program completion, assists them with securing placement in employment, higher education, or the military.

Most Job Corps students live on center. Job Corps must provide its students with a secure and safe living environment so they can achieve their educational goals, such as earning a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, and learning the necessary career technical and social skills they need to obtain meaningful, long-term employment. However, despite the program's zero-tolerance policy for violence and illegal drugs, local Job Corps center operators have failed to report and investigate serious misconduct, and many have downgraded violent infractions to lesser infractions to keep students enrolled.



**Violence at Job Corps Centers**

In 2015, two students were killed at different Job Corps centers, allegedly by fellow students. In one case, a student was shot and killed in his dormitory room at the St. Louis (Missouri) Job Corps center. In the other case, a student was brutally killed next to the Homestead Job Corps center in South Florida, resulting in the center suspending operations and transferring students to other centers. While the two murders put a spotlight on the issue of violence in the Job Corps program, it is a problem the OIG has been reporting for several years.

Between 2009 and 2015, the OIG conducted a series of audits reviewing center operators' enforcement of Job Corps' student disciplinary policies. More recently, partly in response to the two student murders and as a follow-on to an audit OIG conducted in 2015, the OIG's Office of Audit and Office of Investigations conducted a joint review to examine how Job Corps was identifying and managing risks to center safety and security at its 129 centers and satellite facilities.

**Center Safety and Security**

Our 2017 review focused on the following three areas:

1. Job Corps' actions in response to potentially serious criminal misconduct;
2. Physical security at Job Corps centers; and
3. Job Corps' efforts to mitigate violence and other serious crimes at its centers.

We found weaknesses in each of the three areas of our review and made recommendations to Job Corps for improving its response to potentially serious criminal misconduct, strengthening the physical security of its campuses, and enhancing its mitigation efforts.

**1. Not Reporting Potentially Serious Criminal Misconduct to Law Enforcement**

Eleven of the twelve centers we visited failed to report 40 percent of potentially serious criminal misconduct incidents we identified in Job Corps information systems to law enforcement (140 of 348). The number not reported ranged from 1 to 37 incidents per center. The failure to contact law enforcement could compromise center and community safety as students are not held legally accountable.

All 12 centers we visited did not report numerous significant incidents to Job Corps and misclassified many significant incidents they did report. Deficient significant incident reporting negatively impacts Job Corps' ability to make sound management decisions and exercise appropriate oversight.

For example, at one center security staff received a tip that a student was conducting drug deals out of a dorm room. Center security searched the student's room and found three full canisters of illegal synthetic marijuana and various drug paraphernalia. The center did not report the incident to law enforcement or Job Corps, and did not convene a Fact Finding Board to determine if the student should have been removed from the program under its zero tolerance policy. Rather, the center downgraded the incident to a

non-drug related infraction of center rules (pattern of inappropriate behavior) and allowed the student to remain on center.

Furthermore, one-third of Job Corps' centers and satellites in operation at the time of our review had not established cooperative agreements with law enforcement organizations (41 of 129); and 85 percent of the centers that had established agreements failed to include adequate descriptions of center and law enforcement roles and responsibilities (75 of 88). The agreements established also did not include federal, state, and local law enforcement organizations, as required by Job Corps' policy. Defining roles and responsibilities in a formal agreement helps to provide reasonable assurance that potentially criminal incidents will be addressed in an effective, efficient, and safe manner. It also reduces the potential for the mishandling of evidence, the mismanagement of crime scenes, and the inappropriate or prejudicial treatment of suspects and witnesses, which could affect law enforcement investigations and ultimately the outcome of criminal cases.

## **2. Physical Security Weaknesses at Job Corps Centers**

We observed physical security weaknesses related to campus access and monitoring during our site visits to the 12 centers. These weaknesses included inadequate and unmonitored closed circuit television systems, security staff shortages, and compromised perimeters. Job Corps is responsible for ensuring students have a physically secure environment to achieve their educational goals and learn the necessary career technical skills that will lead to meaningful employment. The physical

security weaknesses we observed at the 12 centers put students and staff at risk and could negatively impact student achievements.

Conversely, we identified 31 Job Corps centers and satellites that provided physical security strategies exceeding Job Corps' policy requirements; however, Job Corps had not developed effective processes to share best practices or incorporate them into its policy guidance. As a result, Job Corps missed opportunities to share strategies and methods to effectively identify and address security challenges across all center campuses.

### **3. Lack of Pre-employment Background Checks for Center Employees**

Our review found Job Corps lacked a comprehensive policy defining the center employment positions that should be subject to background checks and how the results of such background checks should be evaluated. Under existing policy, only those individuals employed in child development services and volunteers were required to receive background checks. Policy addressing whether other center positions needed background checks had not been established. Job Corps also did not determine what criminal histories would disqualify individuals from employment. As a result, Job Corps may have placed students at increased risk of harm by allowing potentially dangerous prior criminal offenders on campus.

### **Student Disciplinary Policies**

To provide the safest possible learning environment for students and staff, Job Corps has a Zero Tolerance Policy against violence and drugs. Students who break this policy

are to be dismissed and not allowed to re-enter the program. Other serious misconduct that could lead to dismissal includes persistent disobedience of center rules, repeated or prolonged absences from classes, improper use of center facilities and equipment, and leaving the center without permission.

In 2015, we conducted a program-wide audit to assess whether Job Corps' center operators had taken appropriate action to address alleged serious misconduct at centers. Despite prior OIG audits that had reported lax enforcement of Job Corps' disciplinary policies, this audit identified continuing deficiencies with center operators' enforcement and Job Corps' oversight, which resulted in centers allowing potentially dangerous students to remain in the program. Specifically, we reviewed the security logs at 11 centers and found center operators:

- Did not report 21 percent of the serious infractions tested (58 of 277); and
- Downgraded 15 percent of the serious infractions to lesser infractions (41 of 277).

For example, records at one center showed a student had been found in possession of illegal drugs on center property. Instead of charging the student with a zero tolerance drug possession infraction and dismissing him from the program, the center operator downgraded the offense to a lesser infraction. The student remained on center for an additional 74 days before being discharged as the result of a physical assault infraction in which another student was injured.

The audit also reviewed all 35,021 serious misconduct incidents reported to Job Corps in 2012 and 2013 and found:

- 26 percent of required investigations and student disciplinary hearings were either not conducted or not documented (8,928 of 35,021); and
- 15 percent of the hearings that center operators did conduct were not completed within 3 to 5 days of the center operator becoming aware of the alleged incident, as required by Job Corps' policy (5,304 of 35,021).

These deficiencies occurred because center operators: 1) wanted to provide students who committed serious misconduct with second opportunities; 2) misunderstood Job Corps' policies and data entry requirements; and/or 3) retained students who should have been discharged to avoid the adverse effect of early dismissals on their performance outcomes. Also, Job Corps' oversight practices were ineffective because classification of zero tolerance infractions excluded certain violent offenses, such as fighting and sexual harassment, and the relatively small amount for liquidated damages allowed by Job Corp's contracts with center operators for noncompliance was an ineffective deterrent.

The problems we identified were not new. In fact, OIG had been reporting similar troubles since 2009. Our audits of 13 centers in 2009 and 2010 found that 4 of them did not always convene Fact Finding Boards and Behavior Review Panels as required for students suspected of serious misconduct. For example, from a sample of 188 events identified in security records at the four centers, we found 15 percent required a Fact

Finding Board, but none had been conducted (29 of 188). These students were allowed to remain at the center without consideration of appropriate disciplinary action, including removal from the center, thus potentially placing other students and staff at risk. Based on a sample of 268 students at one center who were separated for disciplinary reasons, we found 16 percent had committed earlier infractions for which a Fact Finding Board or Behavior Review Panel should have been convened, but was not.

In addition to not properly investigating serious misconduct, these audits identified 6 centers where 40 percent of the significant incidents that occurred during our audit period were not reported to Job Corps (94 of 235). These incidents included physical assault, weapons possession, narcotics possession or sales, and other events that indicated a student was a danger to himself or others. Although these six centers may have investigated the incidents and taken appropriate disciplinary action, not reporting the events to Job Corps undermined Job Corps' ability to ensure that centers had taken appropriate actions or to analyze trends to support management and policy decisions at a national level.

#### **Maintenance of Center Facilities**

Inadequate maintenance of center facilities can also pose a risk to the safety of Job Corps students and staff. Our audit in 2013 found Job Corps did not always ensure center maintenance deficiencies were repaired in a timely manner, exposing students, staff, and visitors to potential safety hazards. Specifically, 57 percent of critical maintenance deficiencies involving life, safety, and health issues had gone unrepaired

for more than one year (807 of 1,405). In many of those instances, the repairs had not been funded. However, we found Job Corps had obligated \$29.5 million to correct 718 center maintenance deficiencies that remained unrepaired more than one year later. Moreover, we identified \$32.9 million in unused maintenance funds had expired or were approaching expiration.

#### **Job Corps' Progress**

To address the problems identified by our audits, Job Corps established a Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity, in part, to improve oversight of center safety. However, Job Corps has reported the Division is not fully staffed and it has requested an exception to the current hiring freeze in the Department. Job Corps also stated it is using data from its recently developed Risk Management Dashboard to perform targeted interventions and request issue-specific corrective actions on emerging safety-related issues. Additionally, Job Corps reported it has conducted approximately 50 unannounced center culture and safety assessments to review center safety, security, and culture through direct observation and interviews with center staff and students. Job Corps revised its zero tolerance student conduct policy to increase student accountability and clarify center staff authority to address misconduct. According to Job Corps, students who violate the zero tolerance policy are being removed from the program more quickly. Also, Job Corps stated it is piloting six "Industry Foundation Courses" in the career technical training areas with the highest levels of student enrollment at select Job Corps centers. These courses are intended to increase student engagement and retention, and decrease behavioral issues.



Job Corps reported that it is implementing tools to improve assessment of applicants' readiness to benefit from the program. Job Corps stated it completed the rollout of a new criminal background check process for student applicants in May 2017. According to Job Corps, the new process obtains any existing criminal background information about an individual through a national search, as opposed to previously used local searches. Job Corps is also implementing a toll-free student safety hotline to handle calls of an urgent nature, including calls that relate to the safety and security of Job Corps students and staff. Job Corps stated the hotline is now operating in its Chicago and San Francisco regions. Rollout to its remaining four regions is scheduled to be completed in 2017. Job Corps reports it has completed a series of Center Safety and Security Vulnerabilities Assessments. These assessments evaluated building access controls, campus lighting, and security operations. Finally, Job Corps reported it is improving physical security as funding permits, and will soon complete Phase 1 of a \$12 million physical security pilot for 14 centers. The goal of this pilot is to equip the centers with technology that will enable center staff to increase oversight and more quickly respond to incidents on center.

#### **What Remains to Be Done**

While Job Corps has taken numerous actions to make centers safer, OIG continues to have a significant number of serious incidents reported to us, indicating Job Corps still has work to do. Job Corps needs to expeditiously complete the various safety initiatives it has recently begun. Moreover, Job Corps must be more vigilant in its monitoring to ensure center operators and regional office personnel fully enforce Job Corps' zero

tolerance policy. Job Corps also needs to establish appropriate law enforcement jurisdiction and agreements for each center, assess campus physical security system-wide, and develop and implement policy for criminal background checks of center employees.

### **Conclusion**

As our audits over the past 8 years have shown, the Job Corps program remains challenged in its efforts to control violence and provide a safe learning environment at its centers. Without a safe learning environment for students and staff, Job Corps will struggle to meet its core mission of attracting young people who face economic disadvantages or come from debilitating environments, teaching them the skills they need to become employable and independent, and placing them in meaningful jobs or further education.

Madam Chairwoman, thank you for calling this hearing and for the committee's continued support for the work of the OIG. We look forward to continuing our productive relationship with this Committee and the Office of Job Corps in our shared goal of improving the program's efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you or the other Members of the Committee may have.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you very much, Mr. Turner.

I'm very appreciative again of all of the witnesses. I will begin the questioning this morning.

Chairwoman Foxx. Ms. Barnes, your findings indicate the incident reporting data you analyzed was incomplete. And therefore, the numbers you presented today represent the minimum number of safety related incidents. Do you believe there is a much bigger safety issue than the contractors, Department, and we are aware of?

Ms. BARNES. Yes. Mr. Turner just testified in the March 17 IG report mentioned 12 centers, that 34 percent of the data was missing out of the significant incident reporting system. So my testimony today explains that we reported a minimum number around 50,000 incidents, but it is likely higher. The Department of Labor has also told us that there are problems with the data and the reporting of the significant incidents and is not contained therein. So to answer your question, yes.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you. It is bad enough as it is, let alone the fact that we think it's a lot worse.

Mr. Turner, your work has highlighted two major components of the student safety concerns with the Job Corp program. The first piece revolves around oversight and management deficiencies in the Department. The second piece and of equal importance is contractor complacency or efforts to game the system. Do you believe the Department or contractors have played the larger role in the safety and security incidents that have been observed over the last few years?

Mr. TURNER. I believe that the bulk of the responsibility lies with the Department. The Department is responsible for setting guidelines and policy also for overseeing that operation. In addition, the contractor's work under the guidance of the Department. Although it is somewhat of a joint responsibility, ultimately the responsibility lies with the DOL.

The other part of that too is DOL has the opportunity to evaluate the performance of the contractor so they have some impact on whether they accept the performance that has been given by the contractor.

Chairwoman Foxx. Ms. Barton, do you agree with Mr. Turner's assessment about the contractor's role in the lack of safety protections in the centers?

Ms. BARNES. Yes, I do agree with that assessment. The Department has over our responsibility for developing the policies and procedures and for the implementation of those policies and procedures, oversight and monitoring of the contractors at the Job Corps centers.

Chairwoman Foxx. Mr. Barton, please give me your reaction to Mr. Turner's assessment.

Mr. BARTON. My reaction is safety and security in Job Corps is our absolute, number one priority. Our students come from challenging neighborhoods where violence, gang activity is rampant. There is nothing more important than maintaining safe centers. In Ms. Barnes' opening she said herself many of the incidents occur off site. And that's why Job Corps centers need to continue to be a safe refuge, free of gang activity, free of drug use, free of violence.

And we are everything possible to make sure that our students understand this challenge, staff are trained, centers are safe. And the most important thing is being visible and connected.

Manage by walking around, know every student, know what they are going through, know the staff. This is serious business. We take it very seriously, the lives of over 50,000 young people every single year. And what's troubling is to hear about these events, but I think Job Corps has acknowledged improvements moving forward and the most important platform is safety and security for our students.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you, Mr. Barton.

Mr. Turner, the Job Corps policy and requirements handbook states that the purpose of Job Corps' residential living program is to provide a safe and secure living environment for students. Do you believe Job Corps centers have met this responsibility?

Mr. TURNER. I do not believe they have fulfilled that responsibility. I think part of that is that Job Corps has to do a better job of micromanaging and overseeing some of the jobs that's taking place at the centers. I believe too often they have not provided the oversight by monitoring some of the actions that they expect. And too often the centers have been allowed to kind of operate independently on their own without proper oversight.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you very much. I want to say it is very troubling again, as I said in my opening statements, that the Federal Government -- the taxpayers of this country are funding programs and where deaths occur in the participants who are attending the programs.

Mr. Scott, I recognize you for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to follow up on that last question. Mr. Turner, do you know what the crime rate is for students, similar demographics, outside of the Job Corps, compared to those in the Job Corps?

Mr. TURNER. No, sir, I would not have that information.

Mr. SCOTT. When you say it is not safe, the question is compared to what?

Mr. TURNER. Well sir, when I say it is not safe, what I am saying is that based on the number of complaints that we have received from students and staff, they come through our hotline and some of those come through our submitted and significant incident reports.

Mr. SCOTT. That's right. Any incident would be a disappointment. The question, as Mr. Barton has pointed out, if they were not in the Job Corps, would it be better or worse? And Mr. Barton, can you respond to that?

Mr. BARTON. Yes. According to the latest statistics from the CDC let me just say this, Job Corps students both on and off center are 2.5 times less likely to commit suicide, four times less likely to die from a drug overdose, 15 times safer than their counterparts, 16 to 24 years old nationally.

At Earle C. Clements, we have a 90 percent placement rate, 94 of our students have credentials right now. Students don't achieve where they don't feel safe. They don't prosper where they don't feel as if the environment is safe, warm, friendly and they have outlets to report.

So while we can acknowledge the findings from Mr. Turner and Ms. Barnes, the fact of the matter is safety and security at all Job Corps centers is paramount and we will continue to implement the initiatives from the national Office of Job Corps to ensure the safety and security of all students.

Mr. SCOTT. Now as a result of Job Corps, can you tell me what happens to the prospects for employment for higher education of the graduates of Job Corps compared to the 5 million disconnected youth that you refer to?

Mr. BARTON. I can tell you that Job Corps offers an environment for a student to prosper. But if I would, if I could just take a few minutes, I would like to read you an excerpt from a student. It is in part, it is just a synopsis.

After 8 months of this, my mother told me I had 2 months to figure something out because I could no longer stay there doing nothing. I tried to enlist in the military but that wasn't an option and I didn't know what I was going to do. I did my research and learned about Job Corps. I met with my outreach and admissions counselor, and it sounded tough, but I knew I had to try or be homeless again.

But ever since I've gotten here things have changed so much for me, waking up early, making my bed, cleaning my room, dressing appropriately, going to class consistently, and so forth taught me a lot about discipline and caring for myself. The more I started to accomplish, the more and more proud of myself I became, which pushed me to achieve even greater things.

I feel very safe here at Earle C. Clements Job Corps Academy. I never really had a problem with any other students or staff and I believe this was critical for my success here, because my home environment was unpredictable and chaotic. But here, I was taught to trust again and have felt very comfortable.

So in addition to a safe environment what Job Corps does is give young people hope, a sound platform to move forward.

Mr. SCOTT. And that student seems like he's on a totally different trajectory than he was before the Job Corp program. Do any of you have results of studies that point to the difference in crime rate or teen pregnancy or employment before and after Job Corps experience?

Mr. TURNER. No, sir, I do not.

Mr. SCOTT. Ms. Barnes?

Ms. BARNES. I do not.

Mr. SCOTT. Any question, Mr. Barton, that Job Corps participants are much more likely to get a job, much more likely to improve their education, much less likely to commit a crime or become a teen parent?

Mr. BARTON. I can tell you that the success stories are countless and heartwarming. Just recently we put two of our tile setting completers to work making over \$25 an hour. And this goes for any one of our career and technical training offerings.

Our students are leaving with primary credentials, high school diplomas, and on the pathway to college, advanced training, entrance into the military, and all the while achievement of these heights, of this standard will not occur if students did not feel safe,

if they didn't feel welcome and if they didn't have an outlet to go to if they felt that trouble was coming.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you very much.

Dr. Roe, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROE. Thank you, Madam Chairman. And I want to start by saying I have been a very staunch supporter of the Job Corps since I've been in the Congress the 8-1/2 years I've been here. And I have a Job Corps site in my district which I've visited. I also visited the one in southwest Virginia that had an incident not long ago. And I could not agree more, Mr. Barton, that safety is a huge, huge issue. And I read our literature here and seen the number of what appear to be drug overdose deaths. That's not a Job Corps specific. That's a systemic around the entire population of this country.

I will give you an example, I serve on the Veterans' Affairs committee and 20 veterans a day commit suicide. It is a societal problem. Drug abuse. And where I live in my part of the country, and certainly in southwest Virginia, New Hampshire, Maine other States have a terrible problem with drug abuse. So it is not confined just to Job Corps.

And I think you're absolutely right about a safe environment. I guess one question I have and it has always concerned me, if Job Corps is not there for these students, and I had almost 10 years I lived and worked with young people and patients in inner center Memphis, if not Job Corps, what, what do they end up doing because it's -- I've looked at like this, it is either pay me now or pay me later.

So many of these young people may end up incarcerated or -- and what you, Mr. Barton, have described and the way I always have looked at this is what is the value of saving one young people in changing not only their life, but the life of everybody they come in contact with. I can assure you that if you've got a young man or woman who is making \$25 an hour, they are going to be able to take care of a family, they are not going to need Medicaid, they are not going to need all these services that they may otherwise need.

And I think you pointed out I know there's something that's got to be unique about you if you leave a community, a city, and you go to the Job Corps site, which is in the mountains where I live, and there's got to be something different about you to want to get out to make something of yourself.

So I just say that to start with so what would happen if there were not a Job Corps for these kids? And anybody can take this on.

Mr. BARTON. So I can tell you at Earle C. Clements we have graduation every 30 days. For some of our students, they are the first person in had their family to graduate from anything. I21Mr. ROE. Anything.

Mr. BARTON. And what a proud moment that is. And so what that does is that only doesn't give that student hope but maybe their little brother or sister hope, maybe their cousin, maybe somebody at home. And so it starts another initiative in the house of achievement, knowing that education is powerful and that there is another outlet aside from gang activity, maybe illicit drug use or sales. There is another way to go about this. And Job Corps is a safe place to teach students that.

Mr. ROE. Thank you.

Mr. Turner is the OIG satisfied or anyone can take this, Ms. Barnes too, with the Job Corps actions following the 2015 audit. Do you think they are doing enough to adequately protect? That's been asked once before, but I think we need that for the record.

Mr. TURNER. We are encouraged by what the Job Corps is doing. Previous in 2009 and 2010 audits they corrected everything that we identified as a deficiency. However, part of the problem with Job Corps they need to do a better job with just following through.

Once a correction has been made we found out over time we find that there are still additional problems that resurface. And so we expect that Job Corps needs to do a better job. As far as the 2015 report, we've been encouraged that they have made a big effort to come with a lot of new initiatives. And so those initiatives I think will pay off in the long run.

In regards to your earlier question, OIG believes that the Job Corp program is a very important program. The IG, Scott Dahl, and myself and Elliot Lewis, assistant inspector general for audit, we actually visited a Job Corps center because we wanted to find out firsthand the importance of what was taking place at the Job Corps center.

And we had a chance to meet students that come from rural places and we saw some of the changes and developments and we engaged with them and saw what the program meant to them. I personally had a family member that has gone through the Job Corps program and they have had some advancements in their life due to the Job Corps program.

Mr. ROE. I've been to multiple times to Job Corps sites and spoken at graduations, it is really inspiring.

Very quickly, you found, Mr. Turner, that 32 percent of 41 Job Corps centers have not established a cooperative agreement with local law enforcement agencies and yet that's a requirement. Why wouldn't that have happened? That's pretty simple --

Mr. TURNER. We were kind of surprised by that, because we believe these policies need to be identified early on before something actually happens. It is a little late in the game for an emergency to happen and then you try to find out who's responsible, what roles people have, and what jurisdiction belongs to who. So we think that's an important part, so we were somewhat surprised by the pushback that we were getting from the Department on that.

Mr. ROE. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you, Dr. Roe. Ms. Fudge you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. And thank you all so much for being here today.

Madam Chairman, let me just first bring to your attention an appropriations letter that I helped lead to support Job Corps. It is signed by 133 Members of this Congress from both sides of the aisle. So we are all very supportive of Job Corps.

There are three job centers in the State of Ohio. All of whom have an overall student outcome performance of better than 90 percent, so we are very pleased with the work that is going on in Ohio in Job Corps.

I represent an urban area. I represent the City of Cleveland and the City of Akron. I would argue that there are less safe places than the Job Corps in my communities. But Mr. Barton, we know that Job Corps' intended to serve one of the hardest to serve student populations. Can you expand on what type of services the students need when you receive them? And what degree of direction and discretion did you believe you need to bring these young people to a point where they can be productive citizens?

Mr. BARTON. And again, many of our students do come from very challenging neighborhoods. And one of things that would help a lot if we had some more flexibility and latitude, let's say to command more mental health hours. We see students that come into the program that may have some mental health needs that we don't have the capacity right then and there to treat. So the flexibility for more of those hours or attention to students with those needs would be absolutely helpful.

But again, Job Corps partners with our local community, local hospitals. And I just think the key to the centers success in Job Corps' partnerships but always keeping safety and security first.

Ms. FUDGE. And certainly if you addressed things like mental health, you would probably even see a smaller amount of violence in and around the centers.

Mr. BARTON. It is possible.

Ms. FUDGE. Secondly, Mr. Barton, you testified that due to the revised zero tolerance policy that now almost one in four Job Corps students are expelled. What happens to these students? Where do these students go to turn for help when they can't come to Job Corps anymore?

Mr. BARTON. The one in four statistics is sobering, but I think we need to look at what happens before that. And I think this is an ongoing challenge of Job Corps for us to remain connected with students from the minute they get on center to the time that they graduate, to help them with some of those behaviors, identify them early. However, if a student does not manage to complete the program, they will be faced with just what they were before they entered into the program.

So we try at all costs to have all students be successful and that comes from immediate wrap around services, evening and weekend programs, because that's when most of the trouble happens on the street is at night and on the weekends. So it becomes critical that Job Corps centers have structured evening and weekend programs to make sure that our students have initiatives to be involved in and aren't just wandering aimlessly.

So we think that structured approach in Job Corps will continue to help and we won't have to deal with those -- that many students that don't make it through the program.

Ms. FUDGE. Do you have any idea what the average cost is for a student in Job Corps, annually?

Mr. BARTON. I can tell you at Earle C. Clements it is somewhere in the neighbor of \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year.

Ms. FUDGE. But actually less than it would be if they end up in prison.

Mr. BARTON. Absolutely.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much.



Madam Chair, I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you, Ms. Fudge.

Mr. Walberg, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Turner and all the panel, thank you for being here. Mr. Turner, overall how effective would you say that the Department and the Office of Job Corps has been responding to your safety and security related recommendations?

Mr. TURNER. As I've mentioned earlier, we have seen an improvement in the response. The 2015 report and the 2017 report, they have responded. We have been working with them for the last year and a half on the 2015 report. Let me just kind of give you an example of what happens, when we come up with deficiencies, we did notify the Department. And once we release our report, the Department has 60 days to provide a response to us.

On the 2015 report, they have been also coordinating with us for the last year and a half, so initially they provided us some response, but they have not completed and have not resolved all the issues and recommendations that we identify.

Mr. WALBERG. What recommendations are still outstanding if you could -- ?

Mr. TURNER. It would be easier between 2015 and 2017 to say the ones that they had -- there's only 15 that were outstanding, only two have been resolved. That combined the 2015 into 2017 report.

Mr. WALBERG. Could you give me at least some examples of the 15 that still aren't resolved?

Mr. TURNER. Some of the ones that have not been resolved deals with law enforcement. And it is one of the ones that we are just trying to come to common ground on.

There's also -- the ones that have been resolved, I guess are the backlog, the one that just was completed. The backlog of the serious incident reports. There were over 9,000 backlogged and we just got an indication in the last couple weeks that they had found and resolved most of the issues on that and provided a corrective action plan going forward.

Mr. WALBERG. I guess the next question to come to my mind is if they've come close to resolving this, but the other 15 -- do you know why they are still outstanding?

Mr. TURNER. Well part of it is because -- and we can provide you a list of the outstanding ones, but part of the reason is because in some cases they are kind of giving us a paper fix, they grant us a policy and they want to close the issue. But we want to kind to see the effects of some of the policies that they are suggesting. So it's more than just showing us that you have a copy of a new policy change. We want sometimes to just take a look and observe and to see if the fix that they have suggested actually works and so that is why it is taking longer. For instance, the response that they just provided on the 2017 report they just provided that to us earlier this week. And several of those they proposed that we close. Well, it is premature to close those and we have not had a chance to observe, assess and to see that the fix is really in place.

What happened in 2009 was that we closed some of their recommendations and overtime, they did not have a system in place

to go back and monitor and do checks. I think one of the initiatives that they have now is they are beginning to do more spot checks and have teams that out for up to a week to make sure those places -- those recommendations are taking effect.

Mr. WALBERG. So would you say that right now that they are making a good-faith effort?

Mr. TURNER. No doubt. They are making a good-faith effort.

Mr. WALBERG. You mentioned in your testimony that the Department cannot exercise appropriate oversight due to deficient reporting on significant incidents. What are the full range of dangers involved when Job Corps centers do not report on these incidents?

Mr. TURNER. One of the major problems that happens is for instance I will give you the example of the zero tolerance policy, if we are allowing students that should be dismissed to remain in the program, what you do is you put the other students at risk. And those are with level one offenses, from sexual assault to physical assault, some of these problems that occur. So I think what we've got to do, what Job Corps has to do is look at the center as a whole and see how can they be more effective to protect students. Although I applaud Mr. Barton in what he's going through at his center, but that is just one center of the 129 that we have to deal with.

Mr. WALBERG. Important issues as I understand it, these are recurring findings in many cases.

Mr. TURNER. Not only are they recurring findings, but some of those have not even been reported. I think that's what we saw with the significant incidents. You had some that had not been reported. There were some cases where students actually went to the hospital and that was not classified or not reported to the Job Corps.

Mr. WALBERG. Oh. Well, I hope you keep on it, because the program can have, as we've heard, have great impact, but these are challenges. So I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you, Mr. Walberg.

Mr. Polis, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POLIS. Thank you Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott.

The Job Corps, as you know, can effectively provide specialized services to meet the needs of at-risk young people. In Colorado, the Job Corps center in Collbran provides students with new skills in areas like carpentry, computer networking, and welding. Seventy-two percent of the students receive a credential, those students in our society and the workforce are better off because of these programs.

Mr. Barton, I want to thank you for being here today. You shared some of your experiences and successes you've seen at Job Corps. You mention in your testimony that the national mortality rate for 16 to 24 year olds is 15 times higher for 16 to 24 year olds as a whole compared to participants in the Job Corps. Do you feel if the Job Corps will cut back or eliminated it will put more lives of young people at a higher degree of risk?

Mr. BARTON. It would absolutely be a disaster. Job Corps is needed and necessary. It is a refuge for thousands of young people. The centers provide needed skilled training and a variety of CTT offerings in vocational trades and absolutely it --

Mr. POLIS. In addition to that, think based on your testimony you are also indicating that it would actually put their lives at greater risk if they were not participants in Job Corps.

Mr. BARTON. That's correct.

Mr. POLIS. And even though the national office isn't here today, I have a directive from the national office on Job Corps outlining the steps programs should take just for student safety. And I would like to ask unanimous consent to submit that to the record.

Chairwoman Foxx. Without objection.

Mr. POLIS. It includes the three detectives offered. Even though they are not here today share with us. Even further student safety had you serious Job Corps directors and programs taking the incidents St. Louis and Homestead and what changes are being made to enhance student safety?

Mr. BARTON. Again, those incidents were shocking, but I can tell you the message has been clear. Safety and security is the foremost priority in Job Corps. Immediately Job Corps updated the zero tolerance policy, clarified and went to call law enforcement, updated center security plans, but more importantly it is about being connected to the student body, making sure that we're keeping their living area safe, their dormitories, their classrooms, the center grounds, making sure that students have an outlet to report anything doesn't seem appropriate or right on job corps centers.

And there are ways to do that. There has been a national text line that has been implemented through our national office. Students have email addresses where they can email staff members, any staff member on center, day or night. And so the platform is there. The stage has been set, safety and security by far is what we watch every day, we are plugged into it, we are making sure that centers or at least doing everything we can for the initiatives that have been outlined by Mr. Turner and Ms. Barnes.

Mr. POLIS. And some of those steps that already being taken and will further be approved on are some of the reasons that it is 15 times safer to be in Job Corps than out of Job Corps?

Mr. BARTON. Just think, there is always room for improvement and constantly looking to see what we can do to enhance safety at centers and we will continue to do so.

Mr. POLIS. I also want to ask about your program participation with local community colleges. In Colorado, students part pat in dual and concurrent enrollment are more likely to continue taking classes full-time to get a degree, gives them a leg up in certifications as well. Can you talk about how your Job Corps students receive college credit? Are there programs that support dual enrollment in college courses? What's your experience been with the partnering community colleges?

Mr. BARTON. Certainly. At Earle C. Clements Job Corps center we have a great co-enrollment program with the local high school with the Union County public school systems where students can remain in high school, working on their high school diploma for half a day and then half a day work on a career and technical training initiative at the center. We also have an outstanding partnership with Henderson Community College. We have 10 students enrolled in there and plan to have more in the years to come. But again, what's important wouldn't be able to do this, they wouldn't

think about doing these things if they didn't feel comfortable, if they didn't feel safe, if they didn't know Job Corps was a safe place for them to return after college.

Mr. POLIS. And what would it mean for the students who were served by Job Corps if the funding was severely cut or eliminated, what would their lives look like?

Mr. BARTON. Their options would be drastically limited or reduced, it would be very sad. And quite honestly, they would be faced with a life with challenges that they had before they enrolled in the Job Corps program.

Mr. POLIS. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you Madame Chairwoman for having us here today. Thank you for the witness for being here, Mr. Barton, particularly coming up from home. Actually, as you know, Morganfield, Union County, is in the first district. My colleague James Comer has talked to me at least three times this week about this hearing and testimony and speaks very highly of the way you run your job center and the quality of the job center you have at the Earle Clements.

I also have the Great Onyx, which is in the -- next to the Mammoth Cave national park. So I'm very aware of the good work going on in Kentucky.

But I want to ask Ms. Barnes first a question. It's my understanding there used to be a suitability policy whereby additional reviews were in place to determine whether an applicant was suitable for Job Corps and that this policy was terminated in the previous administration?

I know GAO is in its initial stages of looking into the Job Corps program. But going forward, do you plan on looking into the contracted admissions process and whether the requirements surrounding admissions are being met, and do you think this is some work the GAO should look into?

Ms. BARNES. We do plan to look at additional safety and security issues as well as some of that process. But as you mentioned, we are very early on.

Mr. GUTHRIE. So looking into the suitability of just admissions even into the Job Corps program?

Ms. BARNES. Yes.

Mr. GUTHRIE. You are looking at that?

Have you completed any work in this area? You said it's very early in the process. You haven't really completed any working in this area yet?

Ms. BARNES. Not yet.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Okay. Thanks for that.

And, Mr. Turner, in your testimony, you noted that efforts by the Department to mitigate some of the noted concerns could have been taken much earlier than 2015?

If the Department had asked you to address your concern in a more robust and timely manner, do you think the program would be safer today?

Mr. TURNER. It's hard to say that, with certainty, that it would have been safer. What we have found, through our 2015 and 2017 report, that when nothing is done, their -- their increase and rate

balance moves up a lot more. So that's one of the things that we found.

But I can't say that there would have been a change because of different personnel with people. And so it's really hard to say. But I just can say that if anything does not take place, then there is a marked increase in violence.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Okay. Well, Mr. Barton, so when the admissions process sends people into the Job Corps, is there -- I know they used to have the suitability standard. Is there any concern about that for you? I know that -- so when they look at the admissions process, is this program really suitable for this person coming into the program? Have any of you had any experience with that since that's been terminated that you think should be addressed?

Mr. BARTON. You know, I can tell you at the Earle C. Clements Center, we have implemented a pre-arrival call. So it's a call to the student before they arrive on center just to make sure that the student is serious about obtaining an education and training at the center, they know what to bring, what to expect.

Because we're in a remote location, we are unable to have center tours for most of our new arrivals. So the pre-arrival call really does take the place of that. And so it suggests to the student that they are prepared, they're ready, and they're anxious to come. So that's worked well for us.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Yeah. Union County is remote, but it is beautiful, isn't it?

Mr. BARTON. It is.

Mr. GUTHRIE. That you very much. And that completes my questions.

And I yield back and the balance of my time.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you very much, Mr. Guthrie. Ms. Bonamici, you're recognized for five minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you very much Chair Foxx and Ranking Member Scott for holding this hearing. It's a very important conversation that we're having. And I know that each and every one of us cares greatly about the safety of students at their Job Corps locations. And, of course, we're concerned about that.

And oftentimes, as we see, the data show that students are actually safer at Job Corps than out in the community. And that's certainly true with some of my Job Corps centers.

I have in Oregon, two local Job Corps. Tongue Point Job Corps Center is in Astoria, Oregon; and Partners in Vocational Opportunity Training Center, or PIVOT; in Northwest Portland. And I visited many times and spoken with students and spoke at the graduation at Tongue Point. And I know, Mr. Barton, you talked about what that means to those students and their families to see a graduation. It's really, really meaningful.

Students are earning a whole range of credentials and practical skills, including carpentry and seamanship. Astoria is around the beautiful Oregon coast. Culinary arts, office administration -- a whole range of possibilities and, really, opening up of opportunities for them.

But I want to highlight a story of Cassandra. Cassandra went through a culinary arts program at Tongue Point. She graduated in 2016. She came to Washington, D.C., last year to explain to law-

makers why Job Corps is important to her -- to develop skills, to earn a credential, to learn in a safe environment. And this is particularly important to Cassandra, because Cassandra is transgender. And we know how challenging it is for transgender youth to be and feel safe in the community. And Cassandra is an inspiring young woman who applauded the Tongue Point community for affirming her and making her feel safe in her learning environment.

So, Mr. Barton, in your testimony, you said for many of our students Job Corps is a refuge. And I know you shared some of the stories from your community about what happens when students are able to break out of, you know, gang activity and perceived threats to their safety.

So can you expand on some of the challenges that students face when they return to their communities? You talked a little bit about that. And after you answer that, I want to ask -- Ms. Barnes, your preliminary audit refers and includes the data on offsite incidents. So can you explain what that means? And could that include incidents that happened outside the purview of Job Corps? That doesn't seem like an accurate way to report on the success of the program if, like, Mr. Barton said students leave the program during a holiday or something.

Can you talk about what that means? And, Mr. Barton, can you expand on the challenges that students face when they leave the Job Corps campus?

Mr. BARTON. Absolutely. And most students -- or some students do not return home, and they begin that plan early, as soon as they arrive on the Job Corps center. They know what their home life is like, choose not to return back there. And they begin a plan, a personal career development plan and a projection to not return home.

Many times they team up with some friends they've made at the center, move and live locally to give themselves a fresh start. And that's something that our counseling team and staff work with students on center who want to relocate early in their Job Corps career so, when graduation approaches, it's a smooth transition to a new State, new job, new environment, and a fresh start on life. And that's -- that's the outcome that we're looking for all of our students.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you.

Ms. Barnes, can you talk about what you meant by offsite?

Ms. BARNES. Sure. The offsite incidents include activities that our supervisors are sponsored by Job Corps as well as those that are not. And the reason why we -- it's included in the data I presented today is because the Department of Labor has a policy in their significant incident reporting system to report these type of incidents that involve Job Corps students.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you.

And, Mr. Barton, can you talk about some of the effective strategies to improve safety? We all want students to be safe. So what types of programs and services are you implementing at Earle C. Clements to ensure safe and welcoming living and learning environment? And can you talk about how you could perhaps share that information with other Job Corps centers, is there a way to

do that now so that other Job Corps centers can learn from your experience in making it a safe environment?

Mr. BARTON. Sure. I think the most important thing that we do at the center is make safety a relevant priority to all students, to all staff. We have safety team meetings where students are part of those meetings. We make sure that we have regular patrols on center. Checking every bag when students come back for any type of trips or passes.

But more importantly it's being connected with the student population. Not having a disconnect or a void between staff and students. So, again, managing by walking around, knowing every student, making students or ensuring that students are comfortable to report anything that they see that's out of place on center immediately and them having the confidence in the staff to know that we will react and make sure that we take care of that right away.

So I think it's a litany of things done at one time to make sure that a center is safe.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you. And I see my time has expired.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you very much.

Mr. Estes, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESTES. Thank you, Madam Chair.

One of the things that I want to make sure I focus on in my questions is around the safety aspect, which is, I think, the purpose of this hearing. I know there's been a lot of discussion around the value of the Job Corps program in general, and I want to make sure we focus just on the safety aspect.

And, Mr. Turner, one of the questions I had was, you know, your Department pushed back on the conclusion that law enforcement needs to be contacted by Job Corps centers for potential criminal misconduct. And the 2017 report indicated there were five assaults that required hospital visits that were not reported.

Is better Department oversight needed to ensure that the infractions are being reported?

Mr. TURNER. Yes, there is. We felt like that was part of the problem with the Department, that they did not have any kind of system to monitor what was being done to ensure that people were following the policies that it had outlined.

Law enforcement is a very important part, because without that they could compromise any kind of criminal matter that takes place. And so we were concerned about that and that further puts the students at risk. And that was some concerns that we brought out.

Mr. ESTES. I mean, why would we not -- I mean, have you heard explanations or justifications for not reporting? I think that's the appropriate agencies to help provide that support.

Mr. TURNER. We were surprised. Some of it was they felt like it was hard because there were different levels of law enforcement. Some at the State, Federal, as well as there -- each city -- our area has different agreements. And so there was concern on their part in terms of going in and establish separate agreements. We felt like it was still worth doing that.

The other part they pushed back on is that we felt like there needs to be something in writing that the staff as well as the stu-

dents would be able to understand who to contact when something does take place or when there is a requirement. And so that was part of the problem. There was no written or identified means to establish who to contact. And we think that's important.

Mr. ESTES. I would agree with you in terms of the important standpoint. Being a relatively new Member, we've kind of gone through the procedures for our offices. And one of the things that we've addressed with our district offices are some of those aspects of what we would do if an incident happened with one of our employees there at our district office. So I think that same kind of logic would apply to a Job Corps center.

The other question I had, Mr. Turner, was around the 2009 and 2010 audits. And they identified several issues related to safety. Have those issues been addressed?

I can understand maybe all the issues from 2015 wouldn't be addressed. But those audits that were several years ago now -- should have been enough time to be addressed.

Ms. BARNES. If all the recommendations that came out of 2009-2010 timeframe were all addressed and they were all corrected. What we found to be a problem is there was nothing in place to sustain. There were no policies in place. So there was no spot-checking to ensure that the policies stayed in effect.

So when we -- there are calls for us to go back and actually do some additional audits based on the response that we received from 2013 and 2012. We had a lot of feedback that we they were getting from some of the center students that there as still a violence problem and that was ongoing. And so that prompted our 2015 audit.

Mr. ESTES. Okay. Thank you.

Madame Chair, I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you very much.

Ms. Shea-Porter, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Thank you very much.

I think we're all in agreement that the safety and the welfare is incredibly important, probably No. 1, for the responsibility of the Job Corps. And so it's important that we have this hearing.

But it's also important to remember what the purpose of the Job Corps is and what it does for the disadvantaged youth of our country. So I hope we don't lose sight of that. And I've been encouraged by the positive comments that I've heard at this hearing.

2015 saw the opening of a new center near Manchester in my State of New Hampshire. And we're every proud of the work being done there.

Madame Chair, I ask unanimous consent to add into the record a letter from the Manchester Police Department sent to this committee expressing their support for the Job Corps work and admission and discussing the partnership they have with New Hampshire Job Corps.

Chairwoman Foxx. Without objection.

[The information follows:]



*Chief of Police*  
Enoch F. Willard  
*Assistant Chief*  
Carlo T. Capano



*Commission*  
Scott R. Spradling, *Chairman*  
Eva Castillo-Turgeon  
Steven J. Spain  
Charlie Sherman  
Daniel F. Reidy

**CITY OF MANCHESTER**  
*Police Department*

June 7, 2017

The Hon. Virginia Foxx, Chair  
House Committee on Education and the Workforce  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Bobby Scott, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Education and the Workforce  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

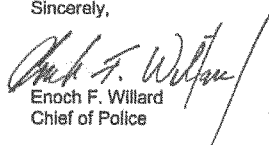
Dear Committee on Education and the Workforce Members:

On behalf of the Manchester Police Department, I write to express my support for the mission and work of the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Corps program. We have established a strong partnership with the New Hampshire Job Corps, working with staff to create a safe culture where students feel secure. The Center has established relationships in the Manchester community for the mutual good of both students and residents. The New Hampshire Job Corps is a benefit to the City of Manchester and a safe place for its students to live, learn and train.

The Manchester Police Department actively collaborates with the students and staff of the New Hampshire Job Corps to enhance the safety and securing of the Center. We have on multiple occasions provided training to the New Hampshire Job Corps staff in the areas of Active Shooter Procedures and Gang Activity Awareness. Officers have presented to the Center's Security and Protective Services Trade about career-pathways and employment opportunities for students interested in a Law Enforcement career. K-9 Unit officers frequently assist the Center's Safety and Security Staff as they promote a Drug-and-Alcohol Free environment at the New Hampshire Job Corps. Additionally, the New Hampshire Job Corps works closely with the department's Community Policing Division as they conduct outreach in our community.

The New Hampshire Job Corps Center provides top-notch training to its students in a secure and professional environment. On behalf of the Center Director Tamer Kohell and the Manchester Police Department, I would like to extend an invitation to this Committee to visit the New Hampshire Job Corps and witness firsthand the safe and supportive environment which exists at this Center.

Sincerely,

  
Enoch F. Willard  
Chief of Police

Michael L. Briggs Public Safety Building  
405 Valley Street • Manchester, New Hampshire 03103 • (603) 668-8711 • FAX: (603) 668-8941  
E-mail: ManchesterPD@manchesternh.gov • Website: www.manchesterpd.com

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Ms. Shea-Porter. Thank you.

Mr. Turner, on page 10, you said the Job Corps reported it was improving physical security as funding permits. Could you expound on that? Is funding one of the main reasons that they're not doing this, or can you explain the role that -- and why you wrote that?

Mr. TURNER. Funding is something, ma'am, that I think that the Department would be better equipped to address in terms of whether or not they could afford to do some of their actions.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Okay. So when they gave you that statement, you just took it and put it into the report. But we don't really know if funding is --

Mr. TURNER. Well, I do know that they have received additional funding for some of the physical concerns -- as far as physical security for some of the centers. I think for this year they have 12 million that they're going to dedicate for 12 centers, and I think next -- 14 centers -- I'm sorry. And next year they have another 12 million for 12 additional centers.

There was a lot of things that we found out in our report from just a physical security aspect, from perimeter to just metal detectors and just lighting around the different centers. So those were some of the things. And when they explained it to us, they did indicate that they had ran out of funding. And that's why that some of those centers did not have those improvements.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Okay. So based on what they told you and what you wrote, funding does appear to have some role -- or lack of funding in some role --

Mr. TURNER. It has some role. But, again, they could speak better to that than we could. But, yes, we were told that it did have some role.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Okay. Thank you.

And you said they corrected everything but they need to stay on it so --

Mr. TURNER. Yes. Again, we found that to be -- the bigger problem is that, once you correct something, that you got to say: You know what? When you look at audits, there is really two big pieces to that. One of it is to identify what's wrong and to -- correcting it. And the other piece of that is ensure that there is a sustainment effort- that you don't go back to the problems you had before.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Okay. Thank you.

And, Mr. Barton, do you think funding has anything to do with some of this? I recognize that it's not all of it. Some of it, you know, the directors bear responsibility for not reporting and not having the relationship that they need to have with the P.D. et cetera.

But do you think funding has some role in what we're talking about.

Mr. BARTON. You know, maybe that would be a better question for the Department of Labor. But I can tell you that Mr. Turner, in his statement, said that Job Corps has reacted. There has been a lot of corrections that have taken place already. And I think that's the position that we're going to continue on. Constant improvement, constant enhancements, making sure we're alert and aware, and keeping safety and security the foremost initiative in Job Corps.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Okay. The purpose of the question is, if it's a question of funding in any way for security, that's something that we would have to address right away if that could make the students safer there.

Also, Mr. Barton, what are you proudest of? When you think about, you know, the work that you do, what's the thing that you are the proudest of?

Mr. BARTON. You know, I think what makes me proud, and possibly a lot of my colleagues, is making a difference in the lives of students that were really in challenging positions before they've arrived at Job Corps.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Okay. And do you have a network with other center directors? Do you have a way to, like, share, exchange ideas, any peer review? Is there any way -- because, obviously -- like we're very proud of ours in New Hampshire. But there appear to be a few that need more support or need some change. Do you have any kind of network that allows all of you to communicate with one another, and is there a peer-review system?

Mr. BARTON. You know, I can tell you Job Corps refers to those as best practices. There was a time when we were able to have meetings and come together as center directors. That has since changed. And we're hopeful that one day maybe those CD meetings and other Job Corps-related meetings can occur again, because they were extremely beneficial.

Ms. Shea-Porter. So you don't even have like a phone network or any way that you can --

Mr. BARTON. Phone and email, certainly.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Right.

Mr. BARTON. But the meetings were effective as well.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Right.

So there's no peer review, peer encouragement, any best practices exchanged very little right now. Am I correct?

Mr. BARTON. Within the Job Corps companies, I would imagine that best practices are exchanged, yes.

Ms. Shea-Porter. Okay. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. The gentle lady's time has expired.

Mr. Barletta, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you.

Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to enter a letter from the National Job Corps Association into the permanent hearing record.

Chairwoman Foxx. Without objection.

[The information follows:]



**National Job Corps Association Statement on  
Safety and Security in the Job Corps Program  
June 22, 2017**

On behalf of the members of the National Job Corps Association, Job Corps' tens of thousands of students and employers, and millions of alumni nationwide, thank you for organizing this important congressional hearing on strengthening and improving the Job Corps program. We have previously shared with members of this committee and Congress our own thoughts for improving Job Corps' federal administration and so we are grateful to have the opportunity to contribute to this discussion.

Job Corps is at the forefront of addressing two of the greatest challenges the United States faces with respect to economic growth and jobs. There are over 4.9 million young Americans who are neither employed nor in school.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, there are over 6 million jobs that remain unfilled because employers cannot find workers that possess the skills they need, costing our country's economy billions of dollars.<sup>2</sup> Job Corps bridges this 'skills gap' by providing these youth with the career and technical education they need for in-demand careers. For over 50 years, Job Corps has helped millions of underserved, out-of-school and out-of-work young Americans to secure gainful employment in high-demand occupations ranging from nursing to information technology to welding.

The President recently said that "[w]e want to make sure that we have the workforce development programs we need to ensure these jobs are being filled by American workers."<sup>3</sup> Job Corps is one of those workforce development programs. The authors of a longitudinal study of the program noted that "Job Corps is the only federal training program that has been shown to increase earnings for this population."<sup>4</sup> More than 70 percent of students earn an industry-recognized credential and 86 percent of graduates transition into employment, the military or higher education. It is also the nation's premier pre-apprenticeship program. As former U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration Assistant Secretary Robert Jones recently noted in *The Hill*, "Job Corps can also contribute to the President's goal of increasing apprenticeship

<sup>1</sup> Burd-Sharps, Sarah and Kristen Lewis (2017). *Promising Gains, Persistent Gaps: Youth Disconnection in America*. Measure of America. Retrieved June 19, 2017 from <http://www.measureofamerica.org/disconnected-youth/>.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017). "Job Openings and Labor Turnover – April 2017." Retrieved June 19, 2017, from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> The White House (2017). "President Trump Leads on Workforce Development." June 15, 2017. Retrieved June 19, 2017 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/06/15/president-trump-leads-workforce-development>.

<sup>4</sup> Schochet, P.Z.; Burghardt, J.; and McConnell, S. (2008). Does Job Corps Work? Impact Findings from the National Job Corps Study. *American Economic Review* 2008, 98:5, 1864-1886.

enrollments, particularly among younger workers, who currently account for fewer than one-in-five apprentices.”<sup>5</sup>

The program continues to bring value to students and taxpayers because it has evolved to meet the changing needs of the students and employers it serves, to build upon the program’s strengths, and to address its shortcomings. For example, based on the findings of Mathematica’s longitudinal study, Job Corps expanded the rigor of its academic programs for younger students such that every Job Corps center now offers multiple avenues to complete a high school diploma and the average Job Corps student advances the equivalent of 2.5 grade levels on the Test of Adult Basic Education in less than one year.<sup>6</sup> In the 20 years since the study’s cohorts went through the program, Job Corps has also introduced opportunities to earn over 100 industry-recognized credentials and established articulations agreements with local colleges so that Job Corps students can start their college career while enrolled in Job Corps.

Nothing is more important to the Job Corps community than the safety and security of the tens of thousands of students placed in our care. We serve at-risk young people from some of the most disadvantaged communities in our country where violence and drug abuse are often all too common. The Job Corps program was built upon the idea of giving these disadvantaged young people a safe and stable place to live, learn, and develop themselves. The success of Job Corps students depends on centers providing those students a safe and supportive living and learning environment.

Job Corps students are far safer on a Job Corps campus than they would be in their own communities. In the past four program years (the most recent data publicly available), the mortality rate for the students at Job Corps centers was 4.70 per 100,000.<sup>7</sup> The national mortality rate for youth ages 16 to 24 during that same time period was 70.88 per 100,000—15 times higher.<sup>8</sup> The homicide rate among Job Corps students is far higher when Job Corps students return to their communities on break or leave. Students at a Job Corps center are 19 times less likely to die of a drug overdose than youth their age outside of the program.<sup>9</sup>

Any student life lost is one too many. This is not an abstract concept to our community. These students are precious to us – we care for them, mentor them, comfort them when they stumble, and celebrate their successes as if they were our own children. In the wake of tragic events in 2015, the entire Job Corps community reexamined both national and center policies and practices and redoubled its efforts to keep students safe on campus, just as many elementary schools, high schools, and college campuses have done in response to unexpected tragedies at their own campuses. We shared best practices, facilitated a conversation with student

<sup>5</sup> Jones, Robert (2017). “Kudos to Trump for valuing vital vocational programs.” June 17, 2017. Retrieved June 19, 2017 from <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/labor/338192-kudos-to-trump-for-valuing-vital-vocational-programs>

<sup>6</sup> Outcome Measurement System Center Report Card (OMS-10); Report Period: 7/1/2015 – 6/30/2016. U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved February 13, 2017 from [http://www.jobcorps.gov/Libraries/Annual%20Reports/OMS10\\_2016.sflb](http://www.jobcorps.gov/Libraries/Annual%20Reports/OMS10_2016.sflb)

<sup>7</sup> Calculated using enrollment and student mortality data provided by the National Office of Job Corps.

<sup>8</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2015 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released December, 2016. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2015, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html> on Jun 16, 2017 4:24:35 PM

<sup>9</sup> Job Corps on-center drug overdose data provided by National Office of Job Corps. National drug overdose data taken from CDC WISQARS Database, 2012 - 2015, United States Drug Poisoning Deaths and Rates per 100,000 All Races, Both Sexes, Ages 16 to 24. Retrieved June 16, 2017 from <https://webappa.cdc.gov/cgi-bin/broker.exe>

leaders on center safety that resulted in the ‘Y2Y’ student-led anti-violence initiative, and organized professional development webinars on safety and security. We are currently working in conjunction with the Arnold Foundation and researchers from Harvard University, Princeton University, and the University of Pennsylvania to test whether such cognitive behavioral therapy strategies can be used to mitigate violence and behavioral infractions at Job Corps centers.

In 2015, the National Job Corps Association submitted policy recommendations to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) regarding steps that could be taken to improve safety and security. Some of these have been implemented, including clarifying the zero-tolerance policy and instituting a national background check.

However, several of our previous recommendations to DOL have yet to be implemented, including:

- Clarifying admissions policies with respect to ascertaining best fit, in accordance with the requirement of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;
- Restoring the ability of Center Directors to conduct behavioral reviews of applicant files and to deny admission based on a desire to “maintain sound discipline”;
- Assuring sufficient resources to pay residential counselors and security staff wages commensurate with the qualification requirements required by regulation;
- Restoring resources devoted to mental health and drug counseling that were previously cut during the Department’s 2012 budget crisis;
- Remedying inefficiencies in addressing construction and building rehabilitation projects related to life-safety concerns; and
- In spite of DOL’s interpretation of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, determining a means for meeting with and incorporating Job Corps operator and center staff input into policy decisions so as to prevent the implementation of misguided policies with unintended consequences, such as reducing mental health and drug counseling resources as a cost-saving measure.

We continue to focus on improving safety and security at our centers through workgroups that have yielded additional recommendations, including:

- Expanding partnerships with local law enforcement and provide supplemental resources to enable centers to randomly conduct canine searches in conjunction with local law enforcement in order to further dissuade drug possession;
- Clarifying policy with respect to local law enforcement to make clear center responsibilities without imposing requirements on law enforcement agencies or limiting the ability of centers to take action; and
- Establishing a workgroup of center operators, staff, and federal officials to determine procedures for assembling relevant experts to investigate on-center student deaths and making recommendations as appropriate with respect to changes in the program’s policies and practices.

Generally, we believe Job Corps could benefit from a management approach that relies less on federal decision-making and 1,500+ pages of regulations and instead relies more on the expertise of those selected to operate the program. For example, the federal government simultaneously requires Job Corps staff to acquire certain training and then denies approval for staff to attend such training. It sets requirements for staff such as residential counselors to have a bachelor’s degree, but then awards contracts to bidders proposing wages that put these qualifications out of reach. This latter issue is, in part, the result of the diffusion of authority from one office, the Office of Job Corps, to three different offices within the Employment and Training Administration.

Rather than a single decision maker responsible for Job Corps, there are now at least three members of the Senior Executive Service that must reach consensus on Job Corps policy.

At least one of these new offices, the Office of Contracts Management (OCM), has by its own stated standards, functioned extraordinarily ineffectively. According to Job Corps' fiscal year 2014 Budget Justification submitted to Congress, OCM uses the percentage of Job Corps contracts awarded within 180 days of request for proposal closing to measure the effectiveness of their procurement management activities. As of June 1, 2017, the vast majority (about 90 percent) of currently open center procurements are in non-compliance with OCM's stated goals, with more than half remaining outstanding for twice the OCM goal. These delays are often the result of OCM having to take corrective actions on these procurements and/or pulling procurements altogether. While these issues may seem unrelated to the management of the program, the instability caused by frequent short-term sole source or bridge contracts leads Job Corps to lose its best staff, which in turn negatively impacts the culture of our centers. These management challenges can be easily addressed by returning the program's administrative model to that under which it operated prior to the last Administration.

For more than 50 years, Job Corps has served as a cornerstone of our nation's workforce development system. Without it, tens of thousands of disadvantaged Americans would be left with little to no opportunities to secure the skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this discussion and look forward to working with the Committee and the Department to strengthen the Job Corps program so that it continues to build upon its 50-year legacy of helping our nation's most at-risk young people transition into gainful employment and productive careers.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Barton, thank you for being here and all that you do for the Job Corps program. As the Republican chair of the Job Corps Caucus, I have long been supportive of the program. The Keystone Job Core Center operates in my district. And during my time as mayor of Hazelton, Pennsylvania, I witnessed the great things that Job Corps can do for these young adults that traditional educational systems could not. I've also seen the local partnerships that the Keystone Center has developed and the tremendous benefit that those relationships have had on my local area.

When I was mayor, the Keystone students worked to restore the old sidewalks around city hall. They also took part in the downtown beautification project, and they designed these beautiful trash receptacles that are still there today. The students there helped volunteer fire departments perform smoke alarm tests and go door to door offering their assistance installing working detectors.

They participated in the United Way's annual Thanksgiving dinner and even volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. The culinary students put their skills to use by preparing meals for many of our local events. And I've also had tremendous Job Corps students intern in my Hazelton congressional district office. And just as Keystone gives back to their community, the community invests in them.

Keystone has a strong working relationship with the Butler Township police department. A partnership that spans over 50 years. The cooperation between the center and the police department is based on open and constant communication.

Most recently, an officer came to speak to the students in the security program about the rewards and challenges of being in law enforcement. Local church leaders visit once a week giving students a chance to talk to someone from outside the center if something is bothering them. Retired folks in the community even drop by to tutor those students. Many students simply do not have access to these types of positive relationships before they came to Keystone.

Now, I'm citing these examples, as you can see, that the students are very involved in our community. The management at Keystone has told me their community partnerships help to reduce safety incidents. And I can see why. Teaching students to live in the community, and to be part of one, fosters a sense of self value that lends itself to a sense of accountability to others.

I'm proud to represent Keystone, and I believe that every Job Corps center has the responsibility to be a good neighbor. I also recognize that Job Corps centers are the first time students have been away from the place where they grew up. Helping them realize a new sense of community is fundamental in making them feel at home, and so is their safety.

So my question, Mr. Barton, is we can all agree that one death or incidence of violence is one too many. Can you tell me about the efforts your center undertakes to engage students in the local community, and if you believe these activities increase safety? And are there ways that the Department of Labor can encourage Job Corps centers across the country to become more involved with their local communities to encourage a culture of accountability, safety, and security?



Mr. BARTON. First of all, thank you for being chair of the Job Corps caucus. We appreciate that. And I need to tell you that, at Earle C. Clements, we -- and just hearing those stories at Keystone, it's quite similar at Earle C. Our culinary students make or prepare meals for Veterans Day, and are always assisting in the community.

But I can tell you that an initiative led by our national office of Job Corps -- it's called Youth to Youth. And that was rolled out. That initiative was put forward 6 months ago or so. And it is an anti-bullying platform. And it encouraged students to get out in the community, work with local school systems, work with local residents to send a message that there are other ways to solve problems besides bullying and hazing and fighting. And that initiative has been extremely beneficial to Job Corps.

Students across the country have expressed other coping skills to deal with problems other than violence or arguments and teaching students how to get to an end without conflict. So that Y2Y, is what's it's referred to, has been extremely popular and successful in Job Corps. And we're going to continue those types of initiatives moving forward.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you for the work you're doing.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. Wilson, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Thank you, Madam Chair.

This is really earth-shattering for me today to be here at this hearing. I think this is the first time since I've come to Congress that I've had three African-American people testifying before a committee. So I say welcome to you. And you're testifying about something that is very close to my heart. Job Corps.

And I've had experience with Job Corps since I was a very young woman. My sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, operated the Cleveland Job Corps for 30 years. And I was involved in all of that operation. And I want to say to Mr. Bartlett, I want to join the Job Corps Caucus. And I appreciate them having a Job Corps Caucus.

As African-American people, we don't have much. Society has not -- has seen that our children don't have the many opportunities that other children have. So the safety that they have put in place, that the government has put in place, and the few things that we do have for these children, one of them that I try to champion is Job Corps.

And Job Corps is one of the best kept secrets in this Nation. And if more people knew the good that Job Corps does, the more support Job Corps would get.

So I can tell you about the Job Corps center in Miami. The Job Corps center in Miami sends to me an intern every semester. From the time I served on the Miami-Dade County school board, I've had Job Corps children interning at my office.

Whenever I have community events, the ROTC from the Job Corps performs at every community event I have. I have HIV/AIDS summits for Black AIDS Day, for National Aids Day. My volunteers are always from Job Corps. I have a huge job fair every year, and all of the school of Job Corps is there to help with that. We

have a drug conference every year, and they are there. We have antiviolence conferences, and they are there.

And I have letters to put into the record from our Miami Gardens Police Department, and it says: "This letter serves to confirm the outstanding relationship the City of Miami Gardens Police Department has with Miami Job Corp Center. We" --

Chairwoman Foxx. Without objection.

[The information follows:]



# MIAMI GARDENS POLICE DEPARTMENT

"BUILDING A SAFER COMMUNITY"



*Delma K. Noel-Pratt*  
CHIEF OF POLICE

June 16, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves to confirm the outstanding relationship the City of Miami Gardens Police Department (MGPD) has with Miami Job Corps Center (MJCC) located at 3050 NW 183 Street, Miami Gardens, FL.

The partnership we have with the MJCC dates back many years. It is within the last several years however that collaboration has led to even greater safety enhancements at the MJCC. It is rare that the MGPD gets any incident calls to respond to MJCC for issues concerning safety. When there is a need, the MJCC does not hesitate to call for any support; whether it be an investigation, assistance with a student issue, or student and/or staff training.

MJCC is involved with the MGPD and the City of Miami Gardens in many favorable ways. The staff and students participate in several activities, as well as serve as hosts at events. A few examples of MJCC's participation with MGPD and the City of Miami Gardens are as follows: Peace in the Gardens, Peace March, Veterans Luncheon, as well as basketball games. Most notably, MJCC has provided a designated office at their Center for use by MGPD personnel. In addition, MGPD Sergeant Alonzo Moncur and Officer Carlos Austin serve on the MJCC Community Relations Council.

We consider the Miami Job Corps Center students and staff to be great partners. We are fortunate to have them in our Miami Gardens community.

Sincerely,

Delma K. Noel-Pratt  
Chief of Police

Ms. WILSON of Florida. "We consider the Miami Job Corps center students and staff to be great partners."

And I know how important it is for you serving organizations to have solid relationship with law enforcement. Can you speak to your center's relationships, Mr. Barton, with the police department? Because we have a great partnership.

And I'll let you speak in a minute, but I want to make sure that I submit these letters for the record: One from the Miami Gardens Police Department, one from Florida Memorial University that has a partnership with Job Corps, one from the Kiwanis club, and one for -- from Urban Growing Institute. And I want you --

Chairwoman Foxx. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



June 20, 2017

**Re: Letter of Support**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the Center Director, the dedicated staff and the ResCare Inc. family at the Job Corps facility in Miami Gardens. Miami Job Corps Center is a clean and safe environment and an excellent opportunity for young people to gain relevant technical and academic training to help them further their careers by attending college, enlisting in the military, or entering an apprenticeship program. In an environment where economic opportunities are limited, you, Director Geoghegan, and the Center are an absolute beacon!

I look forward to continuing to work with the Center through the internship program, mentoring opportunities, and other collaborations between the Job Corps and Florida Memorial University. Clearly, we share a common goal of providing support to our local community and being a force for positive change. I have been appreciative of the opportunity to partner on the Project Restoration initiative and to sharing events like the Young Men's Conference and the FMU Homecoming Parade.

I envision the opportunity to expand the partnership and to continue the excellent work that has been started in our community.

Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis', is written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis  
President

C: Kareem Coney, Special Asst. to the President for External Relations



# Kiwaniis

**Mikhail Braverman,**  
*President*

**Lashura Batten,**  
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*Founder/CEO  
Reciprocate 1906 LLC*

**Dwayne Bowe,**  
*Founder/CEO  
Dwayne Bowe Foundation  
(NFL Wide Receiver)*

869 NW 183<sup>RD</sup> Street  
Miami Gardens, Florida  
33169

June 20, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

As a leader and member of the Kiwanis Club of Miami Gardens, Fl, I have had the opportunity to interact with the staff and students of the Miami Job Corps Center for several years. I know it to be a safe, clean environment for young people to learn career skills and transition to college, the military, or jobs, or apprenticeship programs.

In this past year, we have been holding our monthly meetings on the center, purchasing our lunches in the cafeteria and enjoying a nice meal surrounded by students and staff. We are exploring how we can further interact with the students who are our leaders of tomorrow, including mentoring, leadership training, and planning community service projects we can do as a community.

We are proud to have Miami Job Corps Center in our community and to be able to work closely with them to educate our youth.

Sincerely,

*Mikhail Braverman*  
Mikhail Braverman, President



Urban Growing Institute HQ  
3029 NE 188th St., #1107  
Aventura, FL 33180

TEL +1.888.899.4UGI  
EMAIL [info@urbangrowinginstitute.org](mailto:info@urbangrowinginstitute.org)

June 20, 2017

To Whom It May Concern

I have been in a partnership with Miami Job Corps Center for the last year creating a pilot for career or business urban farming. I have shadowed classes, seen students and talked with them. During this time I have been able to see the change in them in how they present themselves and communicate from the time they first enroll to the way they change within a couple of months. I believe the system is flexible to meet their needs and is changing with the times. The center is a safe environment and I have never had any concerns with my safety. I hope you consider funding for more innovation like we are pursuing here in Miami.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Veronica Palterovich', is written over a faint, large, stylized 'UGI' watermark.

Veronica Palterovich  
President **Urban Growing Institute**

A large, faint, stylized 'UGI' watermark is visible in the background of the page. A smaller, solid version of the 'UGI' logo is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

Ms. WILSON of Florida. -- to come to Miami and see how the Miami Job Corps operates. I want you to listen to the stories that I listen to every day. I go to Job Corps two and three times a year to speak to them. They're in my office all the time.

This is a refuge for these children. Please. Whatever you can, protect Job Corps. Think about where they would be, especially the black boys, if there was no Job Corps. And we all know the answer to that.

And I just want to say to Mr. Turner, you mentioned that the 12 centers you visited -- that the report had security weaknesses and that it was related to the physical campus. Could many of these issues you say are the cause of inadequate security cameras, security staff shortages, is that a result of funding? So let us look at how we're funding these Job Corps centers.

And, Mr. Barton tell me about the police with law enforcement with your --

Chairwoman Foxx. The gentle woman's time has expired.

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Oh, I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. You're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARRETT. Thank you, Madame Chair.

I wonder if any of the panelists could tell me what percentage of Job Corps participants are female?

Mr. BARTON. Well, I can tell you, at the Earle C. Clements Center, we have currently 16 percent female.

Mr. GARRETT. So let me start by saying that I have had the unique opportunity repeatedly to visit the Old Dominion Job Corps, and I'm familiar personally with Danny Grimes, the director of that center. And I am a vociferous advocate for the good work done by Job Corps.

My contention is that, inherent to American citizenship, is the right to have an opportunity, and that Job Corps creates opportunity for young people in circumstances wherein often that opportunity is too difficult to find.

Having said that, the subject matter of this hearing isn't about support for Job Corps. I think there's near consensus that Job Corps is an effective and excellent program that extends opportunity to young people who might have been born amongst the least fortunate of us. But it's about the safety at Job Corps centers.

And the reason I began my questioning with what percentage of Job Corps participants were female, is the data in the ETA that we were provided and the statistics and specifically, in this instance with relation to sexual assault. It's not difficult to determine the rate of sexual assault per 100,000 population in the country. It's not difficult to ascertain that the groups demographically and age-wise most disproportionately affected by sexual assault are the age and demographics of the Job Corps participant pools. But it's still troubling when you learn without regard for the percentage of females in the program, which are 77 times more likely to be a victim of a sexual assault than at the population at large. Conceding, of course, that the numbers are higher for the 18-to-24 age bracket which primarily is served by Job Corps.

It's terribly troubling to me when you learn that 82 to 90 percent of victims of sexual assault are female and the population of the Job Corps centers is roughly 16 percent female. And that you're



still 77 times more likely to be the victim of a sexual assault based on the data that we've been provided in a Job Corps center.

Likewise, we heard testimony from my colleague for whom I hold great regard, Congressman Polis from Colorado, that you're actually at a lower risk of becoming a victim of homicide in the Job Corps, but that doesn't change the fact that participants in Job Corps were 14 times more likely than the general population to be a victim of homicide.

Now, in the general population pool, amongst the ages served by Job Corps, the number is about 15 times more likely; right? So we can demonstrate that Job Corps is, in fact, a safer place fractionally and that we're really reaching out to people who need the help the most?

But I guess what I'm driving at here is I support Job Corps. I support maintaining funding for Job Corps antithetical to the budget of the President who occupies the White House who's of my party. But we do have a safety issue or else there wouldn't be a hearing.

So I suppose the point that I'm driving at here is thank you all for the good work you do, but we're not done yet. There's more that needs to be done. And recognizing that, for example, young women in 4-year colleges are three times more likely to be victims of sexual assault than the population at large.

And so, yes, there are circumstances that are horrible that we should seek to address while it's not throwing out the proverbial baby with the bathwater, right? You guys do good work on the oversight side, on the running-the-facility side, on the program side. But let's keep trying to push these numbers down; right?

So I want to color my remarks with a thank you and an imploration to continue to try to do even better. I don't disagree that Job Corps provides better circumstances for young people than they would have outside the Job Corps. But the numbers are still such that we need to do more. That's all.

Madame Chair, I yield back my time and again thank the panelists, all three. I don't want to see this program be hurt, because people point out numbers like these and use it as an excuse to hurt this program. There's too much good going on. Let's make it better.

Thank you.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you, Mr. Garrett.

Mr. Espaillat, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Madame Chair.

This is a great program, one of a few programs that has survived since the 1960s, including Head Start, Medicaid, Medicare. This particular program, the Job Corps program, I think is an example of what we can do for our -- the people that we represent. What government can do. How government can be a force of good and do for the people that we represent. Obviously, just like any other program, it will encounter difficulties.

Violence is not exclusive of the Job Corps program. You know, there's sexual assault going on in the -- unfortunately, in the armed forces. Sexual assault against women in colleges across the Nation. Violence in the schools. Unfortunate and tragic shootings in the schools. So violence, in general -- it's a problem across society, and it is not exclusive of the Job Corps. I think the Job Corps,

in fact, have helped reduce violence in urban settings by giving young people that would otherwise be exposed to violence an opportunity to move forward.

So, you know, I don't think that we should dismantle this program. I think that we should strengthen it and work with the program to ensure that steps are taken to cure any incidents of violence, just as they occurred across our society. I don't think Job Corps has ownership of that. It is pervasive across society.

And so, Mr. Barton, I know that you first started in Job Corps in the South Bronx, in New York, the State that I represent. And I just want to know: Do you have any numbers for how many people from New York are participating in the Job Corps, by any chance?

Mr. BARTON. At the Earle C. Center?

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Yes.

Mr. BARTON. I don't have those right now, to be specific.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I would appreciate if you can share with them with me at some point.

Ms. BARNES. I will do that.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I want to get that information. And if you can even make them by congressional district, it will be even a greater tool for us to know exactly what our -- how many young people in our district are benefiting from -- what would occur to these young people if the program was dismantled? I mean, what -- what would happen? Explain to me. You were a participant. What would happen?

Mr. BARTON. I think initially many students wouldn't know what to do. Many would be forced to return home to a home life with extreme challenges, no work, lack of skills, lack of education, lack of any type of credential, forced to take low-wage jobs. And it would just create a continuous cycle of not achieving, not feeling as if there's any future.

I think what Job Corps brings is hope for the future, a safe haven for students to achieve high school diplomas, trades, primary credentials, and right to work. And it's so important that -- that we acknowledge that students are leaving, going right to work.

Again, at Earle C. Clements, we have a 90 percent placement rate. Students would not achieve that if they didn't feel safe. It's just a wonderful opportunity for young people to better their lives.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. What kind of professions and trades are young people graduating with the skills to then go into the workforce? This is a great job-producing program. What kind of skills are you teaching them that are -- that is consistent with the need that we have in society for jobs?

Mr. BARTON. At Earle C. Clements, we have carpentry, electrician, we have the deckhand trade, we have facility maintenance, which is warehousing. And all of these trades are applicable to entry and mid-level jobs.

Right now, we have a litany of nursing and healthcare trades at the center. And so we know, with the proper training, with the proper work ethic, that are our students will graduate the program and move on to great jobs and great careers and change their lives and, more importantly, their family's lives.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madame Chair, thank you. I just want to say that, again, the Job Corps does not have exclusivity in violence across America. We want to work with them to save this program and strengthen their -- the steps that they have already begun to take to ensure that no incidents occur in the future.

I yield back my time.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ferguson -- excuse me. Mr. Lewis, you're next for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS. Thank you, Madame Chair, and thank you to the witnesses today. I don't think there's any doubt in this room that everybody agrees with the goals that we're trying to get to. I'm especially enthused by the emphasis on vocational training and what you're doing and what some of the other programs are doing.

But there does appear to be a problem here. The law is fairly clear. -- Mr. Turner, I'll start with you -- on the zero tolerance policy for acts of violence and drugs and other disruptive activity. But as the, you know, inspector general report or the audit revealed, there were center operators that did not report 21 percent of the serious infractions. They downgraded 15 percent of other infractions. There were situations where the OIG found that centers were not contacting law enforcement for 140 out of 348 potential serious criminal misconduct instances. That's 40 percent. Twelve centers did not report numerous significant incidents to Job Corps. The cooperative agreement supposedly established with law enforcement did not materialize. And I'm trying to figure out why that is.

You know, in your written testimony, you suggested that there was an attempt to avoid some of the adverse effects of early dismissals on the performance outcomes. Let me be blunt. Do you think there's been a culture of -- or a conflict of interest, if you will, that, look, if we report all this stuff, contract renewals could be in jeopardy, our centers are not going to look quite as good, they're not going to meet their goals, and so someone's turning the other cheek?

Mr. TURNER. While we did not investigate intentional fraud or criminal fraud, we did find that there may have been several reasons for this.

One of those reasons we feel like may have been in some cases where the center operator was trying to give the students a second chance, in some cases. We also feel like it could have been human error. But we also thought there was a possibility that there may have been some performance, you know, motivation behind that. We felt like, in some cases, the center may have had a conflict of interest, meaning that if they had to -- if they had to graduate X amount of students and they fall short of that, it could have impact on their performance of their contract renewal.

Mr. LEWIS. Yeah. And --

Mr. TURNER. Or bonuses that may be associated with it as well.

Mr. LEWIS. Exactly. And then that concerns me deeply, because you've got, as they say, a bit of a conflict of interest there operating and -- at the expense of a lot of young people.

Do we have plans to put something in place to provide incentives in the other direction to make certain we get compliance and reinstate the zero policy with some effectiveness?

Mr. TURNER. Well, we have not done enough work on this one way or the other. But we can look to do more. It is a concern that we have raised with the department. And so we do share your concern.

Mr. LEWIS. Thank you.

Mr. Barton, I'd like to continue with regard to the effectiveness of the program. I want to make certain we're getting our money's worth. We're going to debate a CTE bill that this committee has been working on today. It provides about a billion dollars -- 1.1 billion a year for Federal support for career and technical education. And yet the Job Corps program costs us \$1.7 billion a year for 50,000 students. That's \$33,000 per student. Where can we get efficiencies here? That seems to be a little bit of a high price to me.

Mr. BARTON. Well, I think we have to look what Job Corps does. Wrap-around services; day and evening structured programs; a safe haven to obtain a high school diploma; achieve multiple credentials; go right into the world of work, college, advanced training, and/or the military. And so when you look at the multiple benefits that over 50,000 students will receive across the country from Job Corps, the student-year cost all of a sudden seems absolutely worth it. Job Corps is an outstanding spend for thousands of students.

Mr. LEWIS. And yet the study you cited found little difference between Job Corps participants and nonparticipants in earnings after four years completing the program.

Mr. BARTON. I --

Mr. LEWIS. How do you -- yeah. Go ahead.

Mr. BARTON. I think students to have a long-term plan. And that's one of the things that Job Corps assists students with: Planning for their future, making sure that they have a good career track, and that the CTT offering that they choose or select has many options and avenues, that they can continue to increase their education level, increase their wages, and make sure they can do better for them and their families.

And there's just one thing that I do want to say about a question that you were asking Mr. Turner. Job Corps centers -- it does not help a Job Corps center to keep a student that is not paying attention to the rules and regulations. What that does is hurt the culture.

Mr. LEWIS. Certainly -- we all certainly agree with that.

Thank you for your testimony. I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you very much, Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Takano, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Madame Chair. I apologize. This seat over here was kind of stuck, and that's why it went -- I just wanted to let you know.

Chairwoman Foxx. No problem.

Mr. TAKANO. Okay.

Mr. Barton, I just want to -- this issue of efficiency and CTE funding to school districts versus the number of students you serve through the budget that you have, is it really fair to compare the supplemental CTE funding that school districts get with the complete total wraparound services that you provide for the young people that come to your program?

Mr. BARTON. You know, I think the question is where would the -- the students that we serve go? That's the question -- traditional schooling -- many of them had trouble in traditional schooling, and they turned to Job Corps as an alternative for their education.

And so one of the things that is a platform for Job Corps is primary credentials. CTT training, ensuring that you leave with a high school diploma. And not looking for a job, leaving with employment.

So certainly it's beneficial. The spend of dollars for students moving through the program to obtain these credentials and to complete their trades and moving right into work, it absolutely makes sense to continue to fund that.

Mr. TAKANO. Yeah. I was just getting at -- there was a comparison being drawn to the number of students that are served with CTE funding versus the number of students that are funded through Job Corps. But I was trying to make the point that it was maybe an unfair comparison, it's apples and oranges, because you have a more holistic complete wraparound that you serve with the students, not supplemental funding with CTE. And it's quite remarkable you actually are -- these students are leaving with the ability -- your program with the ability to go straight into the job. That is quite remarkable.

Mr. Barton, you were an academic manager for a Job Corps at one point. Can you speak to where many students are academically when they arrive into the program?

Mr. BARTON. Sure. Certainly.

Speaking for Earle C. Clements, the majority of our students enter with a reading and math level at about the 8th grade level, 8th or 9th grade level. So certainly, that's a challenge from the very beginning. And again, wraparound services, offering tutoring, day and evening programs. Can't stress that enough. That is when there is idle time. And we need to capture that time with tutoring, structured programs to ensure that students are leaving with reading and math gains which is essential for high school diploma achievement. And --

Mr. TAKANO. A lot of developmental educational work is developing their reading skills, developing their math skills. How intensive is the student-to-instructor ratio? I mean, is it a small ratio? Is it 10 to 1? 20 to 1? As far as the number of instructors per -- or students per instructor.

Mr. BARTON. Right. So in most our classrooms, academic and CTT, it's about 12 to 1.

Mr. TAKANO. Yeah. That's what I was thinking. It's pretty intense. And that's -- that can be expensive. But it's necessary with intensive developmental education that's really going to perform and deliver results.

Mr. Barton, you state in your written testimony that many Job Corps students have been unsuccessful in a traditional education system and have learned maladaptive behaviors for the classroom or workplace. Can you speak to how Job Corps responds to youth under these circumstances and works to ensure that these young people can thrive academically? And you've already mentioned some of them in your early response?

Mr. BARTON. Right. I think it starts with residential living, making sure that students know how to take care of their home, which, in Job Corps, is their room. But waking up on time, dressing for success, wearing your uniform, showing up on time, being attentive in class, being attentive to work-based learning opportunities or internships in the local and not-so-distant area, and showing that work ethic to their supervisor and on-the-job training that they go every day, that they have the ability to come in, follow directions, and have the foresight to do the job well.

Mr. TAKANO. So in your written testimony, you speak to how your center has improved in its efforts with regard to high school completion and credential attainment. Can you speak to those efforts and what it has meant for the center and its students?

Mr. BARTON. Oh, I think it's just -- the placement rate over 90 percent is phenomenal. And what a good feeling it is to watch a student walk across the graduation stage, knowing they're leaving with their high school diploma, their trade, multiple credentials, and a job. And as I've stated before, for many of our students, they're first in their family. And so the primary credential is the graduate placement. All of those things are attained because students feel welcome, safe, secure, and it's in an environment for learning.

Mr. TAKANO. That 12-to-1 ratio -- I just want to go back to that. I just remember visiting Duke University in North Carolina and asking what they do for their freshman writing class. And it's a 12-to-1 ratio. And that kind of, I think, intensity and expenditure and attention to young people, I think, is -- you know, is requisite.

Madame Chair, I'm over my time. I yield back.

Mr. BARTON. Right. I just need to add, that may vary in some class at some times on centers.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you.

Thank you.

Chairwoman Foxx. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Grothman, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Right. I want to dance around between all of you here, but I -- Mr. Barton said something that offended me a little bit, and I'd like to ask him to elaborate on it.

Somebody asked what would happen to these folks if they were not in Job Corps, and you responded they might have to take a low-paying job. I will tell you, I wish we had all the Congressmen around here. Maybe next time Chairman Foxx can go around the table and see how much the first job that every one of these Congressmen -- had how much it paid.

But you clearly belittled the idea of a low-paying job, like it was something not worth doing. And I've always felt that employers, when they look to hire somebody, they're not as much concerned about the credentialism or -- or something like Job Corps. Have you done another job? Have you shown that you're going to show up all the time? Are you courteous, you know? Do you have an employer who's going to say something nice about you?

And I assume you're, to a certain extent, a leader in a community. And I was very concerned that you said that, well, if they weren't in Job Corps, they might have to have a low-paying job,

like it wasn't worthwhile to work for \$8 or \$9 or \$10 an hour. Do you want to maybe elaborate on that a little bit?

Mr. BARTON. Yes. And certainly didn't mean to offend you or anyone else. And it's -- and so let me say this: What we want for our students is for them to attain their high school diploma, multiple credentials, and the opportunity to make a -- or to enter into the workforce equipped to take care of their families and themselves. So certainly, any job that our student gets, we're proud of them. However, we want to make sure that they're equipped to get the best employment possible currently and throughout their working career.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. I think there are probably very few people in our society who can say their first job paid 15 bucks an hour or more. And I certainly -- if I was looking to hire somebody, I would look and see what type of jobs they had before. I wouldn't want to see a credential. I want to see, you know, have you shown that you're a hard worker? Have you shown that you can hang around somewhere for 1 or 2 years. And to kind of imply that there was something wrong with an 18-year-old or 19-year-old making 8 or 9 bucks an hour, I think you're sending entirely the wrong message.

I would be much more likely to hire somebody who was making 8 or 9 bucks an hour and doing a good job at it than somebody coming out of Job Corps, in part because of the reasons for this hearing. And I will open it up to Ms. Barnes and Mr. Turner as well.

I suppose the goal of Job Corps is to wind up with somebody getting a job. And when you hear these statistics, like 50,000 injuries or illnesses, and -- you begin to wonder how tight a ship they're running at Job Corps. You know, if I have to pick at somebody -- if I have an employer and I have to decide somebody who's been working for -- or at least experiencing Job Corps and somebody who is working at a \$9 or a \$10 an hour job for 2 years, I'm telling you, when I -- when I -- if I was paying attention to this hearing, I'd take the person who was working for 8 or 9 or 10 bucks an hour for two years every time.

Because if that person had been working there for that long a period of time, I know that man or woman had proven themselves as worthwhile to an employer out there and would be much more likely to prove themselves worthwhile to me as opposed to a program that looks to me kind of loosey-goosey.

Ms. Barnes or Mr. Turner, do you care to respond to that? Do you think it will make it more difficult or does make it more difficult for employers to hire Job Corps graduates when this sort of -- these newspaper articles get out there? I mean, you can understand, as an employer, why maybe some of these people would be -- would have been better off just working at a regular job even if that regular job paid 8 or 9 bucks an hour.

Ms. BARNES. Yeah, I understand what you're saying. But that was outside of the scope of what we did for this review.

Mr. TURNER. It's also outside the scope for us. I think, to get to your bigger point, it's important that Job Corps clean up the balance in Job Corps so that the image of students that graduate, I think, would be more positive.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. Do you know -- and I don't know that you guys would have it or Mr. Barton would know. Do you know how

many students were unable to get a job after leaving Job Corps because they failed a drug test?

Mr. BARTON. How many students were unable?

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yeah. Does that ever happen? In my district, one of the problems -- you know, first of all, at this time, Job Corps is least needed because our -- at least in my area, the unemployment rate is so low. But one of the problems employers have in my area is a lot of them say that they don't want to hire new employees who can't pass a drug test.

And I wondered, is that a problem for Job Corps recipients? Are you doing constant drug tests to make sure that, when they leave Job Corps, they at least aren't going to, you know, stumble the first hurdle because they're flunking a --

Mr. BARTON. Right. I can tell you that we have a 90 percent placement rate. And so that suggests that our graduates are being hired and are able to pass a test. But I don't have a specific number for that.

Chairwoman Foxx. Mr. Grothman, you're time has expired. The Gentleman can submit questions --

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay.

Chairwoman Foxx. -- to the witnesses and gather that statistic if it is -- if it is out there. And I would encourage you to do that.

Ms. Adams, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you, Madame Chair. And I want to thank the ranking member as well and thank you all for your testimony.

This hearing sheds light on some important issues that affect Job Corps programs and many at-risk youth that it serves. The hope that -- as we focus on the unacceptable safety and security lapses that certain Job Corps centers, that we don't throw the baby out with the bathwater and fundamentally change the program that serves over 800 students in the State of North Carolina whose mortality rate for students rests far below that of the general population.

In fact, we can honestly say that to get rid of Job Corps would put our students in a far more dangerous position than they currently find themselves in. So to that end, Madame Chair, I have a letter from the Henderson Police Department, which serves the Job Corps center in Kittrell, North Carolina, that expresses that sentiment. And I'd like to enter it into the record recovered.

Chairwoman Foxx. Without objection.

[The information follows:]





# **HENDERSON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Chief Marcus W. Barrow**

200 Breckenridge Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
Phone: 252-438-4141  
Fax: 252-438-7311



The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Chair  
House Committee on Education  
and the Workforce  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Education  
and the Workforce  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Committee on Education and the Workforce Members:

On behalf of the Henderson Police Department, I write to express my support for the mission and work of the US Department of Labor's Job Corps program. We have established a strong partnership with the Kittrell Job Corps Center working with staff to create a safe culture where students feel secure. The Center has established relationships in our community for the mutual good of both students and residents. The Kittrell Job Corps Center is a benefit to the Henderson and Vance County Community and is a safe place for its students to live, learn and train.

The Henderson Police Department serves on the Kittrell Job Corps Center's Community Relations Council, participate in its on center job fairs, host various seminars and workshops and provides Job Shadow opportunities. Kittrell Job Corps Center students also assist with our National Night out against Crime event.

For the most part, the young people are generally safer at Job Corps than in their own neighborhoods, due to high crime rates. A great number of the students enrolled in the Kittrell Job Corps Center are from hard areas and has experience violence daily in those neighborhoods.

I close with an invitation to invite your committee members to visit the Henderson Police Department and the Kittrell Job Corps Center.

Sincerely,

Allen Simmons  
Detective  
Henderson Police Department  
200 Breckenridge Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 915- 0675

*An Internationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency*

Ms. ADAMS. All right. Thank you.

I want to focus on the great services that Job Corps has to offer to our communities and the damage underfunding of the program will do to our local economies.

I also have a letter, Madame Chair, from the Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce that expresses that sentiment as well and would like to -- get enter this into the record as well.

Chairwoman Foxx. Without objection.

[The information follows:]



414 S. Garnett Street • P.O. Box 1302 • Henderson, NC 27536  
Phone 252.438.8414 • Fax 252.492.8989 • [www.hendersonvance.org](http://www.hendersonvance.org)

May 26, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

On behalf of the Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce, I urge you to ensure the Job Corps program has sufficient funding to continue connecting employers and young Americans in our community. The Kittrell Job Corps Center is vital to our local economy, and the loss of Job Corps would be devastating.

Job Corps is an important part of the solution to the skills gap facing our nation's employers. In addition, the Job Corps and, in more direct partnership with the Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce the Kittrell Job Corps Center, works for our local communities. Every dollar invested in the program results in nearly \$2 in economic activity in the local economy through the purchase of goods and services in the community. As a result, the average Job Corps center directly and indirectly supports 228 local jobs. Nationally, the 125 Job Corps centers are tied to about 30,000 jobs, the vast majority of which are in the private sector.

Job Corps' success has earned it bipartisan support for 52 years. We respectfully ask that the subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies fully fund the Job Corps program for the 2018 fiscal year. To bring jobs back to the United States of America, we must invest in programs that have a proven track record of preparing a well-trained workforce.

Job Corps is one of the most worthwhile investments toward these goals. For the benefit of the young people in our communities, the employers who hire them, and ultimately for the good of America, we encourage you to support and fully leverage Job Corps' success in preparing these young people for careers.

Sincerely,

John Barnes  
President, Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce  
414 S. Garnett Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
252-438-8414  
[john@hendersonvance.org](mailto:john@hendersonvance.org)

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. Let me start with you. You mentioned that your follow-up report was partially in response to the two student murders that were conducted in 2015. So considering your prior report covers the time between 2009 to 2015, would you agree that Job Corps did not have time to fully implement your recommendations or improve their program management based on the initial report before you began to collect data for the follow-up on report?

Mr. TURNER. Well, ma'am, let me just say that those were two different reports. The first report dealt with student discipline, and the second report dealt with engagement of law enforcement, also review a physical -- I mean, physical security around the centers. And then also what kind of proactive actions could be taken by the center to mitigate some of the problems that we identify with law enforcement.

Ms. ADAMS. Would you -- would it be fair to say that Job Corps should have time to implement your recommendations before further judgment of the program safety or effectiveness?

Mr. TURNER. No, ma'am, because we actually felt like there was a follow-on report that was, again, separate but touched on some of the same themes. But it was a completely different report. So we stand by our report.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay. Ms. Barnes, your report mentioned the number of offsite incidents. Does offsite incidents data include times when a Job Corps student was not under supervision of Job Corps?

Ms. BARNES. It does include that. It includes other things such as supervised program-related activities, like field trips. I mean, we included those because the Department of Labor's policy, all incidents are required to be reported that involve Job Corps students, whether they're onsite or offsite.

Ms. ADAMS. What about victims?

Ms. BARNES. Victims?

Ms. ADAMS. Uh-huh.

Ms. BARNES. Victims are included in -- you mean offsite or onsite?

Ms. ADAMS. Onsite.

Ms. BARNES. Onsite. Yeah. We do have -- did include information on victims as well as the perpetrators in the data.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay. All right. Thank you very much. I have no further questions.

Madame Chair, I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you, Ms. Adams.

I thank our witnesses again for taking the time to testify before the committee today. And I recognize Ranking Member Scott for his closing remarks.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madame Chair. And I'd like to thank the witnesses for testifying today. I want to thank the -- and thank you for calling the hearing.

We've heard a lot about how the Job Corps is transformational for the overwhelming number of students who finish this program. And we've heard that from both sides of the aisle. We've learned about skills training. We did have a comment from our colleague from Wisconsin about whether it's better to be in the Job Corps or just working in a low-skill job. I'm sure if you're running a ship-

yard and have a choice between someone who has been working a low-skilled job or someone that has their welding certificate and knows how to weld, there's no question you'd obviously pick the welder for that nice-paying job rather than the person that had been working at a low-skill job.

Now, I'm not brushing aside the violent acts that have occurred at Job Corps centers or as the gentlelady from North Carolina has just noticed, that you could be, to be in these statistics, offsite and a victim. It's kind of hard to credit the Job Corps for that situation. But these are serious problems, and programs need to continue to work to improve center safety and implement the inspector general recommendations.

But let's be clear. As we've heard from both sides, these young people -- some of the hardest-to-serve young people are a lot better off in the program than continue on the trajectory that they would have been in had it not been for the Job Corps.

Mr. SCOTT. And society is a whole lot better off with young people getting jobs, rather than being on the way to jail.

The OIG and GAO reports do not provide a context or even comparisons to what happens to Job Corps population compared to similar demographics that do not get into Job Corps. And I think when you compare those two data sets, we'll find the Job Corps is a good deal for these young people, but of course there is always room for improvement.

And we need to make sure that all the improvements that can be made are made. I would like to thank the inspector general for the long list of recommendations that need to be implemented.

I am disappointed, as you've indicated Madam Chair that the National Office of Job Corps is not here. They would have been able to better illuminate the steps they are taking to make Job Corps more safe and secure, while confirming the testimony of Mr. Barton showing the change in the young people in terms of employment rate, reduced crime, reduced teen pregnancy and other improvements in their life options.

I know Madam Chair that you have sent an oversight request and I hope you'll share the results of that request with our office, but we need to still hear directly from the office of Job Corps.

Meanwhile, Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the response to the IG report from the employment and training administration.

Chairwoman Foxx. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

## APPENDIX B


## ETA's RESPONSE

U.S. Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration  
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20210

MAR 29 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: ELLIOT P. LEWIS  
Assistant Inspector General for Audit

FROM: BYRON ZUIDEMA   
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training

SUBJECT: Response to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Draft Report  
No. 26-17-001-03-370, *Review of Job Corps Center Safety and Security*

Thank you for the opportunity to review this follow-on report on Job Corps safety and security and to provide a response to its recommendations. The safety and security of Job Corps' students and employees has been and remains one of the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA's) top priorities.

In spite of our concerns with some of the underlying premises of the report with which we disagree — such as the contention that “students are not held legally accountable” — we appreciate the ongoing feedback from your office and demonstrate below how we have made substantial changes to the program as a result of your important work.

Job Corps has made major improvements in safety and security in response to recommendations in the OIG's February 27, 2015 report.<sup>1</sup> We largely agreed with the February 2015 OIG report's findings. As a result, ETA and Job Corps leadership and staff have taken significant steps to strengthen the safety and security of Job Corps system-wide. Many of these steps were taken between late 2015 and January 2017 and prior to the draft issuance of the second review,<sup>2</sup> and were the subject of several Job Corps briefings for the OIG. They include:

- A revised Zero Tolerance Student Conduct policy to support a safe, secure learning environment;
- Center Culture and Safety Assessments that resulted in numerous contractual actions affecting center operators;
- A new Job Corps division dedicated to reviewing and coordinating regional operations and activities;
- A new safety and security hotline;
- A new student-based safety and security awareness program;
- Training for all regional staff on the new Student Conduct Policy and approaches for effective monitoring and oversight; and
- A new national criminal background check process.

<sup>1</sup> OIG Report No. 26-15-001-03-370

<sup>2</sup> OIG Report No. 26-17-001-03-370

Job Corps has made major improvements in safety and security measures. Because of the intersecting timing of the first report issued in February 2015 and the follow-up field work, ending December 2015,<sup>3</sup> much of what was pointed out or recommended in the follow-up draft report has been overtaken by Job Corps' actions. Unfortunately, the timing of the follow-up report (field work ending in December 2015) did not permit the OIG to acknowledge the many steps taken by Job Corps to improve the safety and security situation for its students and staff in the past 15 months. We will discuss many of the safety and health improvements we have undertaken in our responses to the specific OIG recommendations. Significantly, we have already implemented most of the recommendations presented in this follow-up report.

Additionally, the report may well leave a reader with the incorrect impression that the Job Corps safety and security situation is significantly worse than at high schools, community colleges, technical schools, and other organizations and institutions that also serve the same population as Job Corps. For example, a review of the Bureau of Justice Statistics and National Center for Education Statistics Annual Reports would have shown that serious incidents at Job Corps Centers are consistent with what occurs at schools across the country. To be clear, we do not tolerate unsafe conditions for our students in any form; however, we believe that the safety and security issues that arise at Job Corps are no different and on par with the issues that educators face in serving today's young people at comparable institutions.

Our responses to the individual OIG recommendations in the report follow.

**Recommendation 1: Ensure Job Corps' centers report potentially serious criminal misconduct to law enforcement.**

Response: Job Corps has implemented this recommendation. Job Corps requires all centers to report serious criminal misconduct to law enforcement. In August 2016, Job Corps issued Program Instruction Notice (PIN) 16-09 to remind centers of the requirement to contact law enforcement when they "suspect criminal behavior, or when serious incidents occur." The PIN further directs centers to "contact local law enforcement for all emergency situations involving potential criminal activity, and the threat to the safety and security of Job Corps students and staff."

We disagree with the OIG's characterization of the PIN as inconsistent with federal regulations. It appears the OIG audit team may not appreciate the complex legal relationship between Job Corps' regulations, guidance, and handbooks, which under basic principles of administrative law are not inconsistent with regulations if they interpret or address particular points and responsibilities described in the regulations. As the OIG's report notes, Section 5.4, R2, of the Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) expands on the regulatory requirement in sec. 686.925(b) to require agreements with the law enforcement agency responsible for overseeing the response to illegal activity on the center and conditions under which center operators are to call law enforcement. The August 2016 PIN reminded centers that they should call 911 or other appropriate law enforcement agencies in emergency situations. Job Corps has repeatedly and consistently communicated to center operators that all staff should be allowed to call 911 in

<sup>3</sup> Most of the information upon which the OIG follow-on review report is based is field work whose scope covered January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

emergency situations.

**Recommendation 2: Ensure significant incidents are reported to Job Corps and correctly classified.**

**Response:** Job Corps has implemented this recommendation. Job Corps requires significant incidents to be reported to the program and correctly classified. Its new Zero Tolerance Student Conduct Policy was issued on June 1, 2016, and became effective on July 1, 2016. It addresses the OIG's concerns about reporting and classification of significant incidents. This change revised PRH Exhibit 3-1 Infraction Levels, Definitions, and Appropriate Center Actions to clearly define behavior infractions, prescribe center actions, and specify reporting requirements for significant incidents. Each infraction is assigned as a Level I - Zero Tolerance Infraction (requiring immediate dismissal); a Level II Infraction; or a Minor Infraction, depending on the severity of the infraction. All Level I infractions and many Level II infractions require a Significant Incident Report (SIR).

Prior to the effective date of the new Zero Tolerance Student Conduct Policy, the Office of Job Corps conducted training for all components of the Job Corps system to ensure uniform understanding and enforcement of student conduct policies system wide. This effort included three in-person sessions for regional federal employees; web-based training for operators and contract staff; and specific training highlighting the changes in software applications necessitated by the change in the policy.

In addition, Job Corps' national and regional leadership monitors SIRs filed by centers in the program's ordinary course of business. Leadership often reaches out to gather more information to ensure Job Corps policy is consistently and appropriately applied. In March 2016, the OIG asked Job Corps to provide to it, on an ongoing basis, SIRs for seven categories of significant incidents. To date, the OIG has received reports on about 100 incidents. Job Corps has asked for feedback during quarterly meetings with the OIG leadership team, and it has received no concerns from the OIG about how Job Corps classifies incidents. Additionally, in the original findings discussed with ETA in December 2016, the OIG's analysis showed that centers correctly classified about 97 percent of the almost 1,000 incidents reviewed.

**Recommendation 3: Define when law enforcement is to be contacted and the center staff authorized to contact law enforcement.**

**Response:** Job Corps has implemented this recommendation. As fully described in response to Recommendation 1, Job Corps has established policy that specifically defines when law enforcement is to be contacted and addresses center staff authorized to contact law enforcement. ETA does not agree that a more prescriptive, one-size-fits-all policy would be feasible or practicable, and it raised this in meetings with the OIG audit team. While the report states that "Job Corps centers need to contact law enforcement to investigate serious incidents," this recommendation is impractical, misconstrues Job Corps Centers' relationship with law enforcement, and overstates its ability to assure investigations from those entities. Centers need to be able enter into an agreement with law enforcement and negotiate mutually agreeable provisions. Job Corps cannot dictate to local law enforcement agencies when it is appropriate to be contacted by a center, what types of incidents they will respond to or investigate, and what types of items they will remove from centers.



Job Corps has operated 126 centers in 126 different communities, and the kinds of incidents—serious and otherwise—to which Law Enforcement Officials (LEOs) will respond differ from community to community. In one major city, for example, police will not respond to calls from the center unless there is a life-threatening emergency. Many LEOs will not retrieve illegal drugs and controlled substances less than a felony amount in weight. Some LEOs will not come to a center to investigate an assault unless the victim wants to press charges. As of today, 94 percent of Job Corps Centers do have current agreements with local law enforcement, and efforts continue to obtain agreements for four percent of the centers. The remaining two percent of centers have LEOs that are unwilling to sign agreements. Some LEOs stated that they will provide similar services to Job Corps that they will provide for private citizens and organizations. When agreements are less detailed, it often is because LEOs do not want to be bound by parameters that may hinder their flexibility to respond as they deem appropriate.

It is also important to reiterate that Job Corps has repeatedly and consistently communicated to center operators that all staff should be allowed to call 911 in emergency situations.

**Recommendation 4: Define center authority to investigate potentially serious criminal activity, including conducting searches, interviewing suspects and witnesses, performing surveillance, and collecting evidence.**

**Response:** Job Corps has implemented this recommendation. The Job Corps' PRH defines center authority to investigate potentially serious criminal activity, including conducting searches, interviewing suspects and witnesses, performing surveillance, and collecting evidence. Job Corps has an unambiguous policy describing the limited situations where center staff may conduct searches, and when law enforcement must do so. PRH 5.4, R7, sets forth documentation and situational requirements before conducting searches for unauthorized goods on campus; flatly prohibits strip searches; and states that searches for evidence to support criminal prosecution "must always be done by a law enforcement officer with a search warrant, except when delay would endanger the physical well-being of students."

ETA also contends that we must distinguish between center enforcement of the Zero Tolerance Student Conduct Policy and investigation of alleged criminal activity for law enforcement purposes, which is the responsibility of law enforcement agencies. Job Corps' behavioral policy, like those of many schools and universities, prohibits conduct that also may violate criminal law in some or all states. Centers must investigate activities that violate the disciplinary code regardless of whether or not those activities also might violate applicable criminal law. Depending on the severity of incidents, this can include conducting investigations and holding Fact-Finding Boards within a few days of an alleged incident. These center investigations and Fact-Finding Boards — which may include searches, interviewing witnesses, reviewing videotape, and collecting evidence — are not criminal investigations, nor are they meant to replace, supplement, or duplicate the role of law enforcement in investigating alleged criminal misconduct. In other words, centers do not act as law enforcement agencies or as agents of the police.

Rather, under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution, Job Corps is required to provide students appropriate due process prior to behavioral separation or imposition of any other sanction. To fulfill this obligation, centers conduct investigative activities and hold Fact-Finding Boards. A center's failure to investigate thoroughly a student's alleged violation of Job Corps' behavior

management system before conducting a Fact-Finding Board and separating a student would violate the student's constitutional right to due process. Center investigations and Fact-Finding Boards are thus an integral component of the Job Corps behavior management system rather than part of or intended to affect criminal investigation.

Job Corps has requested examples from the OIG audit team about where center actions taken in accordance with their responsibility to enforce the Zero Tolerance Student Conduct Policy negatively affected criminal investigations or prosecution of crimes; as of this writing, the OIG audit team has not provided such examples. We look forward to additional conversations about this subject.

**Recommendation 5: Establish jurisdictional agreements that cover applicable Federal, State and local law enforcement for each center, including a determination of which LEO or combination of LEOs based on type of criminal activity that occurs.**

Response: While more than 90 percent of Job Corps Centers have agreements with local law enforcement agencies, it is not within the authority of Job Corps to require local law enforcement agencies to establish such agreements. A few key enforcement agencies, such as the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, are not willing to enter into such agreements.

The OIG follow-on review report suggests that Job Corps students' safety and security is jeopardized by a lack of detail in law enforcement agreements regarding jurisdiction. ETA disagrees with this premise, and the OIG did not identify incidents where this occurred in its report or during its review. Still, Job Corps students' safety and security is first and foremost to ETA, and the program requires centers to contact law enforcement in all emergency situations and in response to serious criminal activity—even in the absence of an agreement with local law enforcement or where the existing agreement does not contain the level of detail suggested by the OIG.

Where local law enforcement enters into an agreement to define its relationship with a center, these agreements necessarily vary in detail based on the specific circumstances of each center, local law enforcement agencies' priorities, and their willingness to include specific details in such agreements. These agreements primarily set out the circumstances in which local police will respond to an incident at the Job Corps Center; they also can memorialize Job Corps Centers' responsibility to contact the closest law enforcement organization to respond to emergencies and serious criminal activity. Where law enforcement does not wish to define its relationship with the center, the center still maintains a relationship with local law enforcement, albeit one that is not formalized, to ensure that agencies can respond on short notice to emergencies and serious criminal activity.

The OIG report suggests that "[t]he matter of jurisdiction is a cornerstone of criminal law as it relates to Job Corps." However, criminal law jurisdiction, as discussed in the report, is distinct from law enforcement's ability to respond to emergencies and investigate crimes on a Job Corps Center. As used in the report, the term "jurisdiction" refers to which entity has authority to prosecute a suspect accused of a crime on a Job Corps campus — not to the geographic area in which law enforcement will respond to crimes and emergencies.

Establishing jurisdiction for criminal law prosecution is complicated for Job Corps Centers, and such jurisdictional issues have only arisen a few times in recent years. While questions about the proper court with criminal law jurisdiction over incidents at Job Corps Centers can arise during prosecution of alleged criminal activity, those issues have no relation to Job Corps students' safety and security. Thus, because jurisdiction is relevant to the prosecution rather than investigation by law enforcement of an alleged crime, we disagree with the report's contention that not establishing the jurisdiction of each center could "impede or defeat criminal investigations."

The report also asserts that (a) a "lack of clarity regarding jurisdiction could lead to confusion and delayed LEO responses to potentially serious criminal activity," and (b) determining the criminal law jurisdiction at each center would "eliminate any potential confusion regarding which LEO to call and the level of involvement by each." Job Corps is not aware of any instance where a law enforcement organization has refused or delayed a response to a request for assistance from a Job Corps Center over jurisdictional concerns. Because Job Corps continues to explore ways to improve the safety and security of Job Corps' students and employees, we would appreciate receiving any specific examples that the OIG audit team has found of past situations where a "lack of clarity" about jurisdiction prevented a timely response to serious criminal activity or an emergency situation.

In addition, contrary to the report's suggestion that jurisdiction simply "depends on the nature and location of the misconduct," determining prosecutorial jurisdiction is a complex question under the constitutional and statutory provisions governing federal lands and their interactions with states. Its answer can depend on information such as how and when the federal government acquired the property (if it is owned by the government) and whether the state has ceded certain jurisdictional rights to the federal government as a consequence of its occupancy. How these rights are ceded varies by state; some states require state legislation, others delegate this authority to governors or allow the decision to be handled administratively. States may cede jurisdiction for parts of a property, but not others. Because many Job Corps Centers are located on second- or third-use federal properties, complete records of how the federal government first acquired the facility may not be in the possession of Job Corps or the Department of Labor. Thus, a definitive determination of jurisdiction would likely require significant research and resources—and still not be definitive because of disputed issues of law and fact that would require resolution by a court of competent jurisdiction. That resolution could only be obtained as part of a criminal prosecution.

Job Corps will require that all center operators submit annually to ETA Regional Offices and the Job Corps Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity their written cooperative agreements with local law enforcement agencies – or an explanation about why such agreement could not be accomplished. Job Corps staff will review the agreements to determine whether they are complete, current, executed by appropriate officials, and contain minimum PRH requirements. While Job Corps cannot require law enforcement to include specific details in the agreements, it will provide assistance to those centers that do not have agreements in place or where agreements are lacking in detail.

**Recommendation 6: Identify and address physical security challenges at centers.**

**Response:** ETA agrees with the basic premise of this recommendation that physical security challenges at centers must be identified and addressed and is implementing this recommendation. In its Request for Proposal (RFP) to potential center contractors, Job Corps establishes its broad requirements for contractors to develop and implement procedures to ensure students feel safe and secure on center. Contractors must describe how they will tailor safety and security procedures to the unique features of the center, which are specified to include whether the center is an open campus with or without fencing, whether the campus is in a high crime area; a rural location, and so on. Offerors respond to the RFP, and Job Corps program experts on the technical evaluation panel determine whether the applicant's detailed solution for safety and security meet the requirements in the RFP. The contractor selected must perform according to the terms and conditions of the contract, which were originally identified in the RFP.

Job Corps holds contractors accountable, using a risk-management process that identifies key indicators and is designed to predict the emergence of student misconduct and safety issues at Job Corps Centers. This process considers many risk factors such as significant increases in reported serious student misconduct, and identifies leading indicators of potential security and safety issues at centers. The process helps Job Corps' staff to identify specific centers that are not providing a safe and secure environment for students and employees and focus attention and resources on those centers before more serious concerns surface.

Focused on continued improvement, Job Corps is proactively improving physical security as funding permits, including implementation of a \$12 million physical security pilot at 14 centers selected using criteria based upon comparative risk and areas of greatest need. The physical security system, put in place at each center, leverages existing technology to improve center safety; this includes physical access controls and video surveillance to detect and respond to incidents (video analytics, lockdowns, visitor management, panic messages, and partnerships with local police.) One center is complete, three are in progress, and 10 centers have completed initial surveys. Job Corps anticipates that all center work will be completed by September 30, 2017. Depending on funding levels, Job Corps will roll out the physical security system to 14 additional centers and then continue this phased approach until all centers have the new technology.

In addition to the physical security pilot, Job Corps also continues to conduct Job Corps Center Safety and Security Vulnerabilities Assessments of 12 centers. These centers were selected using criteria based upon the crime statistics in the designated center's commuting area, data captured from the Job Corps Security Needs Survey, and the incidents occurring on center. These assessments include, but are not limited to, the following security elements: (a) access control of buildings; (b) access control of campus; (c) campus-wide emergency notifications; (d) closed-circuit television; (e) campus lighting; (f) security operations; (g) campus signage; (h) grounds maintenance; and (i) other issues related to the overall security of the campus. As of this writing, all planned center assessments have been completed. Remediation of the findings from these assessments depends upon the availability of additional Construction, Rehabilitation and Acquisition (CRA) funding.

**Recommendation 7: Implement methods to share best physical security practices systematically and in a timely way.**

Response: Job Corps will continue to inform its center operators about best practices on physical security, including the many new physical security practices being instituted under the physical security pilot program discussed above. However, there are legal limitations on what information Job Corps may share. Some contractors' security techniques may be considered confidential proprietary information which may be protected from disclosure under applicable law, such as the Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1905.

As a way to improve the sharing of best physical security practices with all center operators, Job Corps intends to hire a physical security specialist as part of its new Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity. This will provide Job Corps with a source of physical security expertise to be provided to all Job Corps Centers.

**Recommendation 8: Require Job Corps to proactively and continuously evaluate and improve its efforts to mitigate violence and other serious crimes at its centers.**

Response: Job Corps has implemented this recommendation. Job Corps has established several integrated policies and practices across multiple divisions to proactively and continuously evaluate and improve its efforts to mitigate violence and other serious crimes at its centers. For example, Job Corps has developed a comprehensive, strategic, risk-based approach to identify centers with high levels of programmatic risk. In addition, it has undertaken several national initiatives to strengthen Job Corps safety posture and institutionalize a culture of mutual accountability. Looking forward, Job Corps established the Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity to coordinate regional operations and activities by improving communications between the national and regional offices, strengthening quality assurance, and working to promote continuous improvement. The following summarizes Job Corps and the Division's efforts to date to improve center safety and security.

Job Corps has established a dedicated toll-free student safety hotline, 844-JC1-SAFE. This number is for calls of urgent nature or calls that relate to the safety and security of Job Corps students and staff. The hotline, employing telephone, text, and email/internet, is serviced by licensed professional staff skilled in the effective delivery of counseling, social work, behavioral health, psychology, conflict resolution and follow-up, as well as possessing an extensive knowledge of laws, law enforcement, and community-based services. Operational in the Chicago region, Job Corps anticipates expanding access to the entire Job Corps program in 2017.

Job Corps is implementing a new National Criminal Background Check process for applicants who request enrollment into the Job Corps program. The new process will obtain any existing criminal background information about an individual through a national search, as opposed to previous local searches. This will improve the scope, accuracy, and timeliness of information to fulfill the background eligibility requirement and provide a consistent and uniform process. National Criminal Background Checks started in the Atlanta region in the fall of 2016. They were rolled out in the Philadelphia region in February 2017, and will be rolled out to all regions by June 30, 2017.

Job Corps currently is developing and testing a comprehensive new student enrollment process to better provide that young people admitted to Job Corps not only meet the minimum program requirements, but that they can benefit from what Job Corps offers. The new admissions process includes two tools: (a) an updated tool for admissions staff to review any criminal background or court involvement, and (b) a tool to help assess readiness for Job Corps participation. The latter tool includes readiness indicators such as motivation and positive work attitude. Other enrollment process improvements include new quality assurance checks for all applications. Implementation of the comprehensive new student enrollment process is ongoing, with full, program-wide implementation by December 30, 2017.

Early in 2016, Job Corps introduced extensive changes to its behavior management policies in response to center assessments, recommendations from the OIG's February 2015 Student Conduct audit, and other events which raised concerns about center safety and operators' interpretation and adherence to Job Corps' behavior management requirements. Job Corps' revisions clearly define misconduct infraction categories. They provide specific definitions or examples for serious infractions and a crosswalk that identifies the previous infraction title and its corresponding new title, provides an explanation of any change, and a definition of the new infraction along with examples to provide a common understanding and proper classification by center personnel. The revisions also add a column to PRH Exhibit 3-1 to help centers determine whether the cited infraction requires that a SIR be entered into the SIR system. A Menu of Progressive Discipline Interventions and Sanctions was added to standardize these actions, set limitations, and provide progressive consequences for emerging patterns of minor infractions. Job Corps conducted training for center personnel prior to the effective date of the new policy, encouraging feedback from operators and experts for possible refinements.

Job Corps uses a risk-management based approach to schedule Regional Office Center Assessments, or ROCAs. Each center has two comprehensive assessments during the life of a contract, ideally during years two and five. However, Job Corps Regional Offices make adjustments to scheduling based on center performance and emerging problems at a Job Corps Center based upon information tracked through a Risk Management Dashboard (RMD) and other triggers.

Job Corps also employs targeted assessments focusing on specific program areas in response to Significant Incidents, whistleblower allegations, and other deficiencies identified during ongoing monitoring at the regional and national levels. Targeted assessments also verify the status of a contractor's corrective actions taken in response to violations communicated through formal correspondence, such as a Letter of Concern, or Cure Notice. These targeted assessments typically are unannounced. Examples of triggers that could initiate an adjusted full or targeted assessment (outlined in PRH Change Notice 15-08) include:

- Unfavorable results of performance, operational, or financial audits;
- Constituent issues (including email, telephone calls, and hotline reports);
- Whistleblower allegations;
- Unsatisfactory center progress in response to a PIP;
- Element of performance that is significantly below par;
- Failure to address initially cited ROCA weaknesses;
- Need to verify contractor's progress on Corrective Action Plan;

- Significant Incident Reports (either a very serious single incident or a negative trend);
- Sharp decline in Student Satisfaction Survey results;
- Significant facility issues; and
- Significant findings and concerns on operator annual assessments.

The implementation of targeted assessments – for example, the Center Culture and Safety Assessment (CCSA) – allow Job Corps to be more agile and responsive to data-driven, risk management tools that identify program weaknesses, inconsistencies, and non-compliance particularly in the area of center safety and security. The CCSAs are performed using a standardized, targeted assessment tool that focuses on 10 PRH sections; these sections comprise 18 requirements pertaining to the specific operational and compliance areas that have the highest impact on center safety, culture, and risk based upon in-depth analysis of critical breaches that occurred previously. From September 2015 to December 2016, 43 CCSAs were conducted, resulting in contractual actions including Letters of Notification, Letters of Concern, Cure Notices, and Show Cause Letters. (The CCSAs may be augmented by a Job Corps Center Safety and Security Vulnerabilities Assessment of the pilot centers mentioned previously.)

Job Corps also introduced a Corrective Action Tracker (CAT) to monitor issues uncovered during assessments that were serious enough to warrant contractual action and follow-up. Job Corps' Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR) in the Regional Offices use the CAT to document center corrective actions and their monitoring efforts to ensure that contract deficiencies are addressed. As part of its oversight function, the Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity monitors completeness and accuracy of Regional Office documentation around "open issues," and it maintains a bird's eye view of compliance issues program wide. Through review of regional activities, the Division serves as a quality control function and provides real-time assistance and guidance so that program wide oversight activities are timely, consistent, and effective.

Job Corps also engaged students in violence mitigation efforts. At the 2015 National Job Corps Association (NJCA) Training Conference, about 90 Job Corps student ambassadors approached the National Director seeking to leverage the power of Job Corps students to reach other students within their communities for the purpose of addressing violence, aggression, and bullying. Job Corps developed a student-organized and student-led campaign called Youth 2 Youth: Partners 4 Peace (Y2Y) for Job Corps Centers across the nation. Y2Y Student Ambassadors' efforts culminated during Y2Y Week 2015, where the Job Corps National Director visited the Long Beach and Detroit Job Corps Centers to address the students, participate in some planned activities, and obtain student feedback on safety and security.

In 2016, Y2Y Student Ambassadors took their engagement into the communities where they live, learn, train, and work. Through events such as the Listening & Learning Session in Washington, D.C. with the National Director; community engagement pilot programs in Louisiana, Maine, and North Carolina; and webinars with student leaders, Job Corps' Ambassadors continued the conversation about ending youth violence. Y2Y Week 2016 marked the culmination of a year's worth of nonviolence efforts by 630-plus Y2Y Student Ambassadors at 100-plus Job Corps Centers across the nation. Throughout the week, the Y2Y Student Ambassadors encouraged more than 37,000 Job Corps students to take their message of peace into their communities by inspiring others to share stories of nonviolence, meet with law

enforcement, coordinate peace walks, and engage in other community events. More than 100 centers hosted peace walks on September 21, 2016, the International Day of Peace, to symbolize the unity and strength of their ongoing commitment to ending violence in the community. Job Corps has made Y2Y a permanent part of its ongoing efforts to promote safe centers. The results of Job Corps' dedicated focus on violence mitigation efforts and increased student involvement in center safety initiatives are reflected in improvement in Job Corps' Student Satisfaction Survey. The survey is conducted twice a year in March and September. The safety rating, as of September 2016 was 88.2, the highest level since March 2014.

**Recommendation 9: Define the types and frequency of background checks needed for the different employment positions within centers and the criminal histories that would disqualify individuals from employment.**

Response: ETA agrees that we must define the types and frequency of background checks needed for the different employment positions within Job Corps Centers, as well the criminal histories that would disqualify individuals from employment and is implementing this recommendation. Because background checks implicate several federal and state laws, including civil rights laws, Job Corps carefully and mindfully is developing a new, written background check policy for staff.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this OIG follow-on review report. ETA takes seriously its responsibility for the safety and security of Job Corps students and staff, and we remain committed to working with the OIG on ways to improve the program.



## Appendix C

## ETA Response to Draft Report

U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary for  
Employment and Training  
Washington, D.C. 20210

FEB 20 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: ELLIOT P. LEWIS  
Assistant Inspector General for Audit

FROM: PORTIA WU *PW*  
Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training

SUBJECT: Job Corps Needs to Improve Enforcement and Oversight of  
Student Disciplinary Policies to Better Protect Student and Staff at  
Centers Draft Report No. 26-15-001-03-370

Thank you for the opportunity to review the report on enforcement and oversight of student disciplinary policies and to provide a response to its recommendations. The safety and security of Job Corps' students and employees is one of the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) top priorities. ETA is committed to serving young people who are overcoming tremendous challenges in their home communities and providing them with education, job training and other opportunities to succeed in the workforce and in life.

ETA and Job Corps are deeply concerned about the well-being of students and the impact any misconduct has on them and their families. As the Office of Inspector General (OIG) acknowledged, ETA independently recognized the need to strengthen safety and discipline at Job Corps centers system-wide and has taken action to improve safety and security at all of our Job Corps Centers. These actions, which are described more fully in response to the OIG's specific recommendations, include directives from the Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training to Job Corps regions instructing them on how to deal with safety issues at centers; a directive to contractors reminding them of their contractual obligations to protect students; a broad national review of Job Corps' oversight and accountability systems; center risk assessments to identify those centers with indications of safety and/or security concerns; development of an internal risk management process; development of a Center Safety Guide for regional staff when conducting visits to assess a center's safety; comprehensive safety monitoring training for all Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs); strengthening data validation and data integrity reviews; informing the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) of student misconduct issues at their centers; and a memorandum from the National Director to the contractor community reminding operators and staff of the consequences of falsifying records.

ETA appreciates the feedback provided in the OIG's audit. We agree with the OIG's recommendations and take seriously our responsibility to quickly and effectively implement actions to address them. Our detailed responses to your recommendations are as follows:

**Recommendation 1: Require Job Corps centers and their respective operators to strengthen policies and procedures to ensure serious student misconduct is promptly reported, investigated, and resolved in accordance with Job Corps' disciplinary policies.**

ETA agrees that Job Corps centers must ensure that serious student misconduct is promptly reported, investigated, and resolved in accordance with Job Corps' disciplinary policies. Job Corps has already placed an increased programmatic focus on student misconduct issues, and has taken a number of actions that strengthen identification of centers where the reporting, investigation, and resolution of student misconduct may be a concern. ETA has also provided guidance to Job Corps federal staff and operators that clearly communicates that ETA expects Job Corps' Zero Tolerance policy to be enforced fairly and consistently in order to ensure student and staff safety and security at all times. ETA has identified procedures and tools that improve Job Corps' ability to provide oversight of student misconduct issues and take timely action to address issues when they occur.

As indicated above, on September 26, 2014, I issued a memorandum to all Job Corps center operators, outreach and admissions providers, and career transition service providers. This memorandum reinforced the responsibility of contractors to report significant incidents and maintain an environment where all students have the chance to learn and succeed, and reiterated the penalties for violation of these contractual requirements. At the same time, I issued a memorandum to all Job Corps regional office staff that underscored the importance of ongoing work in Job Corps to improve student safety, and informed Regional Directors and managers of a broader effort to improve accountability and outcomes in the program. The memorandum also instructed the regional office staff to immediately take several specific actions related to student safety, including conducting unannounced monitoring visits to centers with a focus on high-risk or low-performing centers.

ETA is also in the process of establishing a new centralized division in the Job Corps National Office to coordinate center oversight directly with the regional offices, strengthen quality assurance, and improve communication and coordination across the system. The division will be responsible for reviewing the results of all risk management data, Regional Office Center Assessments (ROCAs), Job Corps' response to safety and security deficiencies at individual centers, and other monitoring data and will work directly with the regions to address identified program deficiencies. In addition, this division will develop a standard operating procedure to ensure incoming issues, complaints and allegations are referred to the appropriate unit and

sufficiently addressed. The Fiscal Year 2016 President's Budget includes an increase of \$3.5 million in Job Corps Administration funds specifically to provide staff for this division.

**Recommendation 2: Clearly define all student misconduct infraction categories to ensure the infractions are properly classified, zero tolerance infractions include all significant violent offenses, and all infractions are appropriately addressed. This includes providing specific definitions and/or examples for serious infractions such as physical assault with bodily harm, fighting, physical assault with intent to harm, threat of assault with intent to intimidate or coerce, and sexual harassment.**

ETA concurs that Job Corps' disciplinary infraction levels must be updated and clarified, and ETA is presently updating its policies. The revisions will provide clarity and make it easier for students, operators and staff performing monitoring and oversight to distinguish among infractions and identify the appropriate sanction.

The program's primary guidance related to oversight of student misconduct is contained in the Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH), which Job Corps is in the process of modernizing. As part of this process, Job Corps is reviewing all of its operational policies and procedures, many of which impact personal safety and quality control on centers. Job Corps will prioritize conducting a complete review of infraction levels and corresponding sanctions. Student misconduct infractions will be clearly defined and the administrative actions that follow serious infractions will be sufficiently detailed to eliminate confusion. Various terms used to classify misconduct infractions are also defined within the Significant Incident Reporting System Incident Coding Definitions, and corresponding changes will be made to this system as well. This effort is targeted for completion in September 2015.

**Recommendation 3: Require regular monitoring and prompt investigation of significant increases in reported serious student misconduct.**

ETA agrees that we must require regular monitoring and prompt investigation of significant increases in reported serious student misconduct. Recognizing the need to strengthen the performance and accountability of the Job Corps program and particularly to ensure serious student misconduct is promptly reported, investigated, and resolved, in late 2014 ETA convened a team of senior federal staff and experts to conduct a broad national review of the Job Corps' oversight and accountability systems. The effort was led by an ETA Deputy Assistant Secretary, along with a team of senior managers and consultants familiar with the ETA programs. To assess regional office and National Office quality assurance operations, the team reviewed National Office policies and procedures and had intensive discussions with more than 80 of the 124 Job Corps staff at both the regional and national levels, visited every regional office, and toured a Job

Corps center in each region. The team met with center management, staff and students to discuss program quality, student safety, and general center operations.

The goal of the national review was two-fold: 1) to ensure that Job Corps center operators, both contract and USDA, are operating effective and efficient Job Corps centers on behalf of the government; and 2) to assess the extent to which Job Corps' oversight and monitoring of operators results in contract compliance, high performance, strong student outcomes, and safe and secure Job Corps centers. As a result, ETA is implementing systemic process improvements in a number of areas to greatly strengthen oversight and accountability and ensure serious student misconduct is promptly reported, investigated, and resolved.

Based on communication with the OIG and OJC's own internal quality assurance review, Job Corps developed an internal risk management process that identifies key indicators and is designed to predict the emergence of student misconduct and safety issues at Job Corps centers. The process considers numerous risk factors, including significant increases in reported serious student misconduct, and identifies leading indicators of potential security and safety issues at a center. This process will help Job Corps' monitoring staff identify specific centers that are not providing a safe environment for students and focus resources on those centers, before more serious concerns surface on safety, outcomes and academic metrics.

Job Corps is also intensifying monitoring by its Regional Office staff, developing corrective action plans for individual centers as needed, and following up more aggressively in monitoring student misconduct issues. Job Corps is conducting comprehensive safety monitoring training for all CORs. The first phase began in December 2014, with webinars for staff on the topic of risk management. Job Corps is also strengthening data validation and data integrity reviews to monitor the integrity of safety and security data.

On August 13, 2014, the Job Corps then-Acting National Director issued a memorandum instructing Job Corps regions to conduct immediate reviews of applicable data to identify centers that may have problems in applying the Zero Tolerance policy. In response to the memorandum, Job Corps regions conducted data and file reviews of indicator data (total terminations, Zero Tolerance terminations, Serious Incident Report data, Student Satisfaction survey results, average On-Board Strength, ROCAs, complaints, and other information) in order to perform a center risk assessment. The risk assessments identified centers that have indications of potential safety and/or security problems. Job Corps regions immediately began conducting monitoring visits for these centers following the procedures outlined in a newly developed Center Safety Site Visit Guide.

The Center Safety Guide will be used by regional staff conducting center behavior management systems and safety site visits. The highly-detailed protocol includes an extensive evaluation of

center safety. It includes pre-visit interviews; pre-visit data reviews; on-site interviews; on-site data review; on-site observations; and on-site focus groups with students and staff.

Further, the National Director is taking a more active management role by increasing oversight of regional travel plans to ensure adequate center monitoring is taking place. The National Director has recently directed all regional offices to conduct unannounced monitoring visits, in part to assess how centers are handling student misconduct issues. ETA is also revising and standardizing the monitoring process; a team of Job Corps Regional Directors and National Office managers has been tasked to develop clearer standards for conducting ROCAs. A ROCA is the cornerstone of the monitoring and quality control system. It is a comprehensive on-site evaluation of center compliance with Job Corps operations requirements that covers all aspects of center operations and usually takes a week to conduct. Establishing clear and precise guidelines for how ROCAs will be conducted and how corrective actions will be implemented when problems are identified will facilitate more effective monitoring and timely improvements when necessary.

**Recommendation 4: Eliminate the backlog of unaddressed Level I zero tolerance and Level II infractions identified by this audit.**

ETA concurs that any backlog of unaddressed Level I Zero Tolerance infractions and Level II infractions must be eliminated. We have discussed this recommendation with OIG staff and understand that its purpose is to ensure that current students and staff are not at risk because required disciplinary actions for students who remain in the program were not performed. ETA will follow up to determine if there are current students that have records of Level I and II infractions entered in the Center Information System that have not yet been resolved and will require these infractions to be addressed promptly.

Since the OIG review was conducted, Job Corps has taken some steps to ensure that these infractions have been properly addressed. In the August 13, 2014 memorandum to the regions, the then-Acting National Director instructed regional staff to conduct immediate reviews of applicable data to identify centers with potential Zero Tolerance policy enforcement issues. Site visits were conducted for the centers identified, at which time emphasis was placed on resolving those unaddressed infractions. As the result of a site visit, failure to properly administer the Zero Tolerance policy was among the factors cited for not renewing the operator's contract at the North Texas Job Corps Center.

**Recommendation 5: Develop and implement an effective deterrent, such as financial penalty, to better enforce centers compliance with Job Corps' student disciplinary requirements.**

ETA agrees that an effective deterrent is needed for centers that fail to enforce Job Corps' student disciplinary requirements and will aggressively implement liquidated damages when appropriate. However, Job Corps has additional – and potentially more effective – deterrents at its disposal which it intends to use to enforce compliance with student disciplinary requirements. Every center operation contract requires that the contractor comply with the PRH, and failure to do so will trigger prompt corrective action.

As a result of its recent quality assurance review, ETA plans to implement a strategy of progressively escalating corrective actions, tied to the operator's contract performance. The progressive approach requires ETA to keep track of a contractor's effectiveness in remedying performance and promptly escalate to stronger tools of enforcement when the contractor is failing to remedy performance in the timeframe provided. Progressive tools of enforcement include, in increasing levels of severity, a letter of concern or a letter of deficiency, a cure notice, a show cause notice, and eventually, if the contractor fails to correct the problem, a choice by Job Corps to terminate or not renew the operator's contract.

This approach will address emerging performance deficiencies, including centers' failure to comply with student disciplinary requirements, before they escalate to a more serious level. Under this regime, contract operators must promptly address student disciplinary concerns and provide immediate corrective action, or they will risk escalated contract actions such as contract termination.

**Recommendation 6: Determine and work with their respective contracting personnel to recover liquidated damages for prolonging disciplinary separations and overstating on-board strength.**

Job Corps will not tolerate fraudulent reporting and will use the full extent of contractual and other remedies, including criminal referrals, when operators fail to comply with program requirements pertaining to student safety and security. On January 8, 2015, the National Director issued a memorandum to the Job Corps contractor community reminding operators and staff of the consequences of falsifying record, including security records and overstating on-board strength.

The Contracting Officers will work with the program office CORs to determine whether liquidated damages can be assessed according to the terms of the contract. Each contract must be considered individually based on its specific terms. All appropriate and allowable liquidated damages will be assessed and recovered.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review this report and provide a response to its recommendations. ETA takes seriously its responsibility to quickly and effectively implement

actions to address them. We look forward to working with the OIG to implement these additional actions for continued improvement and oversight of Job Corps' student disciplinary policies.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I hope soon we are going to work together to try and improve the program, because it does provide successful options for thousands of young people across our Nation.

Thank you and I yield back.

Chairwoman Foxx. Thank you, Mr. Scott. I want to clarify for the record a couple of issues that came up in the testimony that we did not get facts in.

Job Corps received approximately \$1.7 billion in the fiscal year 2017 omnibus, which included a \$15 million increase to be used specifically for improving the safety and security of the program. The fiscal year 2016 omnibus spending bill directed the Department of Labor to review and address student safety concerns throughout the program in order to maintain a safe and effective learning environment.

As was mentioned by Mr. Lewis, each student participation cost is \$32,960 for the most recent program year for which data is available.

And in the President's fiscal year 2018 budget request, it's approximately \$1.4 billion for Job Corps. It requested no reduction in the program construction or administration accounts but would reduce program operations funding by approximately 237 million. The budget includes proposals to close chronically low performing centers and giving priority to enrollment of students age 20 or older.

This hearing was established to discuss the safety and security of Job Corp programs, that was the emphasis. However, many of my colleagues have talked about why we need Job Corps programs. And as I sat here and listened, I thought it is a commentary on our culture that we are comparing murder rates and assault rates in Job Corps with the larger culture. And it's the larger culture that creates the needs.

What we're doing is continuing to put Band-Aids on the problems of the larger culture and that is very troubling to me, that we do not look at what creates the need for a Job Corps. We are not putting the emphasis on the fact that we have a dysfunctional culture. These young people should feel safe and secure in their home community and not have to be taken out of their home community and placed in a setting like Job Corps.

I realize that people feel that they should promote this program because it serves students who need help, but I'm appalled at the dismissal of the safety concerns that we've heard today. It's quite obvious, despite what some people are saying, that safety and security are not paramount in these centers or we would not be seeing the horrific number of deaths and violent behavior that we've heard about today. And these numbers are just the minimum numbers of these incidents.

We can see safety is a concern of students. One in five students think about leaving because of safety concerns, based on the research. But we have ongoing work to delve deeper into the issue and something we cannot gloss over.

Both the Department and the contractors have a lot of work to do and importantly that work must persist and continue to be enforced over the long term.



Bottom line, these numbers are alarming and cannot be tolerated in a program that uses taxpayer dollars and it's a lot of money.

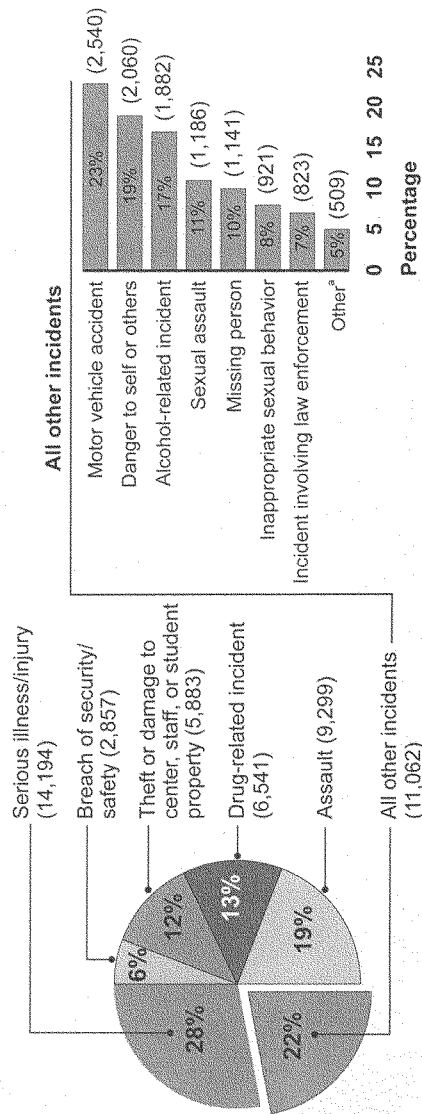
I thank our witnesses again for being here. I thank all the members who came and were engaged.

There being no further business, the committee stands adjourned.

[Additional submissions by Ms. Barnes follow:]



# Types of Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers, January 1, 2007 – June 30, 2016



Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-17-596T



**Number and Percentage of Reported Onsite and Offsite Violent Incidents with Student Victims and Perpetrators, and Staff Victims and Perpetrators, January 1, 2007 – June 30, 2016**

	Total number of reported incidents	Reported incidents involving students		Reported incidents involving staff	
		Victims	Perpetrators	Victims	Perpetrators
Assaults	9,280	6,459 (70%)	8,153 (88%)	781 (8%)	119 (1%)
Homicides	65	41 (63%)	23 (35%)	5 (8%)	0 (0%)
Sexual Assaults	1,186	1,061 (90%)	723 (62%)	2 (<1%)	15 (1%)
Total	10,531	7,561 (72%)	8,889 (85%)	788 (8%)	134 (1%)

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-17-586T

[Additional submission by Chairwoman Foxx follows:]

## **Fast Facts: Student Safety in the Job Corps Program**

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- Over 30 different government reports & audits have raised concerns over the safety & security of the Job Corps program.
- A 2009 IG report noted that “40% of 235 significant incidents occurring at [6] centers during our audit period were not reported.”
- There have been 9 student deaths and a number of violent or health related incidents since 2015.

[Additional submissions by Ms. Fudge follow:]

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 6, 2017

The Honorable Tom Cole  
 Chairman  
 Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
 Human Services, Education, and  
 Related Agencies  
 House Committee on Appropriations  
 H-309, U.S. Capitol  
 Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
 Ranking Member  
 Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
 Human Services, Education, and  
 Related Agencies  
 House Committee on Appropriations  
 1016 Longworth House Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Cole and Ranking Members DeLauro:


As you continue your work in preparing the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, we urge you to include funding for Job Corps that is at least commensurate with the funding levels included in the FY 2017 House and Senate bills.

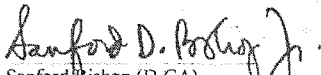
Job Corps is at the forefront of addressing two of the greatest challenges America faces with respect to economic growth and jobs. There are over 5.5 million young Americans who are neither employed nor in school. At the same time, there are over 5.6 million jobs that remain unfilled because employers cannot find workers that possess the skills they need, costing our economy billions. Job Corps bridges this 'skills gap' by providing these youth with the career and technical education they need for in-demand careers.


Job Corps is a proven academic and job training program. In program year 2015, the average literacy and numeracy gains made by Job Corps enrollees were greater than 2.5 Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) grade-level equivalents and nearly 80 percent of students left with an industry-recognized credential. As a result, 86 percent of graduates secured jobs or enrolled in higher education. Job Corps is capable of serving more than 50,000 out-of-work and out-of-school youth each year and we encourage you to prioritize investments to ensure the program connects as many youth as possible with careers.

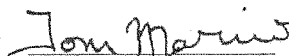
We appreciate your ongoing support of Job Corps and urge you to prioritize our request to provide sufficient funding for Job Corps to fill its beds and classrooms. Your support will allow Job Corps to continue its track-record of providing effective career and technical education to many of the most vulnerable young Americans in our communities.


Sincerely,


  
 Marcia L. Fudge (D-OH)  
 Member of Congress

  
 Sanford Bishop (D-GA)  
 Member of Congress

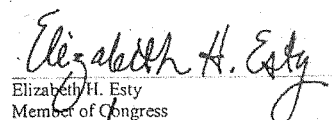
  
 Lou Barletta (R-PA)  
 Member of Congress


  
 Tom Marino (R-PA)  
 Member of Congress


  
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress

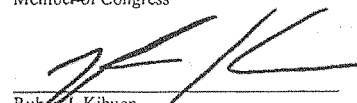
  
Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress

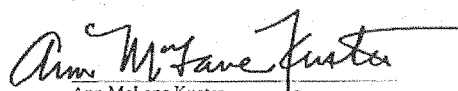
  
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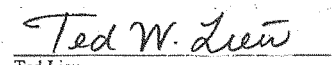
  
Elizabeth H. Esty  
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Colleen Hanabusa  
Member of Congress

  
Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

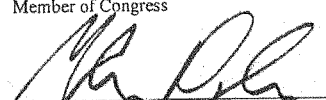
  
Robert J. Kihuen  
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Ted Lieu  
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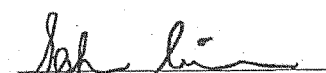
  
Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress


  
Vicente Gonzalez  
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Denny Heck  
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Ro Khanna  
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Dan Kildee  
Member of Congress

  
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Mia Love  
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*Alan Lowenthal*

Alan Lowenthal  
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*Roger W. Marshall*

Roger Marshall  
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*Richard E. Neal*

Richard E. Neal  
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*Jacky Rosen*

Jacky Rosen  
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*Filemon Vela*

Filemon Vela  
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*Nanette Diaz Barragán*

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*Mike Bost*

Mike Bost  
Member of Congress

*Michelle Lujan Grisham*

Michelle Lujan Grisham  
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*James McGovern*

James McGovern  
Member of Congress

*Frank Pallone, Jr.*

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

*Cedric L. Richmond*

Cedric L. Richmond  
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*David Scott*

David Scott  
Member of Congress

*John Yarmuth*

John Yarmuth  
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*Earl Blumenauer*

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*Julia Brownley*

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

*Brendan F. Boyle*

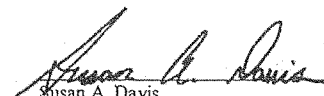
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Member of Congress



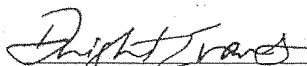
Michael E. Capuano  
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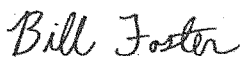
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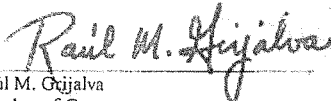
Susan A. Davis  
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Dwight Evans  
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Bill Foster  
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Raúl M. Grijalva  
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John Katko  
Member of Congress



Hakeem Jeffries  
Member of Congress



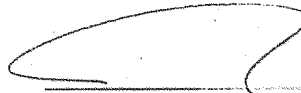
Brenda L. Lawrence  
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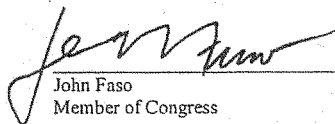
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James Comer  
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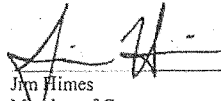
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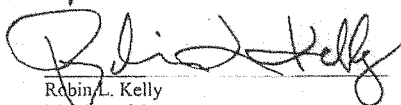
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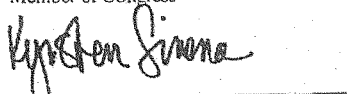



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Member of Congress

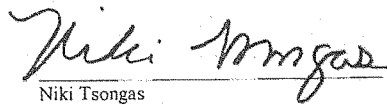
  
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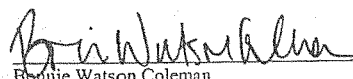
  
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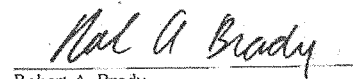
  
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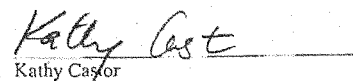
  
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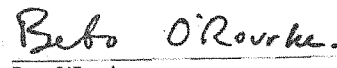
  
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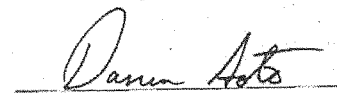
  
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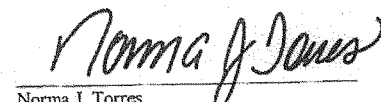
  
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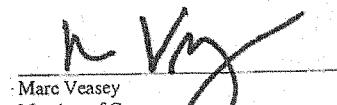
  
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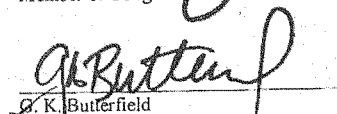
  
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 Darren M. Soto  
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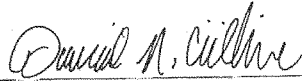
  
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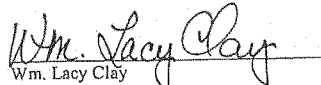
  
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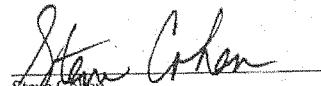
  
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 Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



Wm. Lacy Clay  
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Steve Cohen  
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Jim Costa  
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Elijah F. Cummings  
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Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



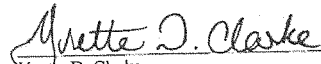
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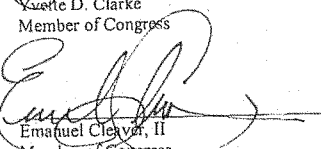
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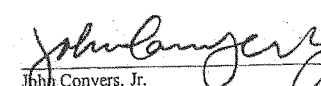
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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



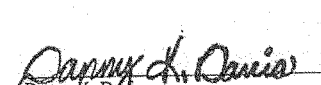
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Member of Congress



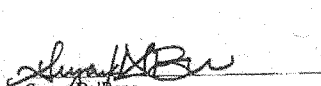
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Member of Congress



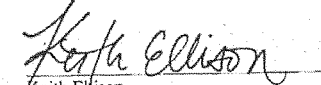
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Member of Congress



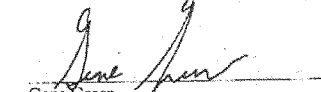
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Member of Congress



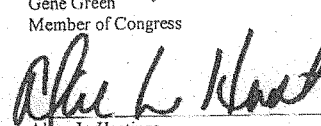
Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



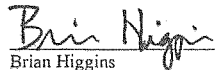
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Member of Congress



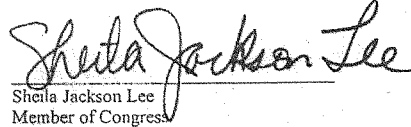
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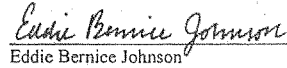
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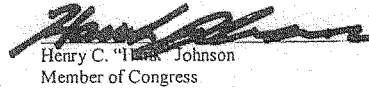
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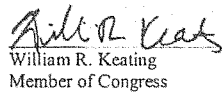
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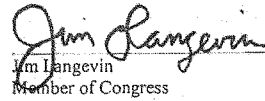
Eddie Bernice Johnson  
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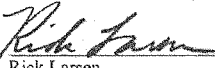
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson  
Member of Congress



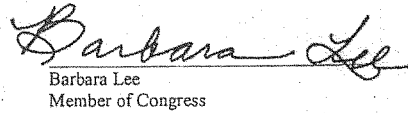
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Member of Congress



Jim Langevin  
Member of Congress



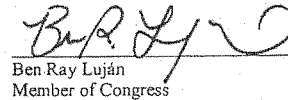
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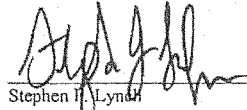
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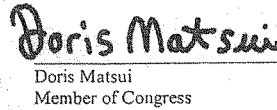
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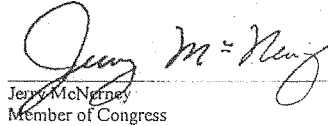
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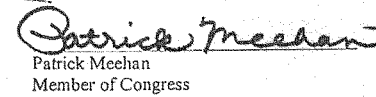
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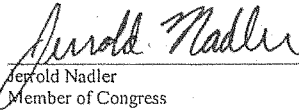
Doris Matsui  
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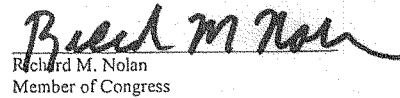
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Member of Congress



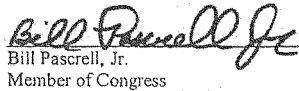
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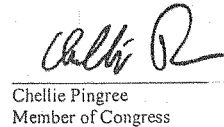
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



Richard M. Nolan  
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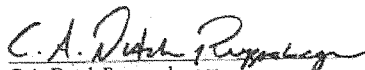
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



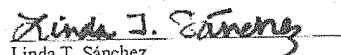
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Member of Congress



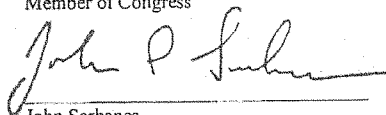
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
Member of Congress



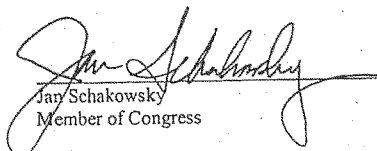
Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



John Sarbanes  
Member of Congress



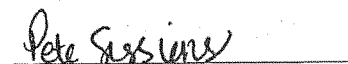
Jay Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



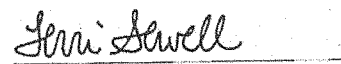
Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



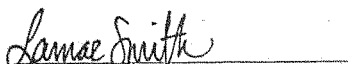
Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress



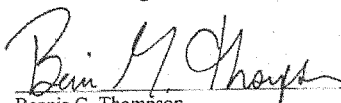
Pete Sessions  
Member of Congress



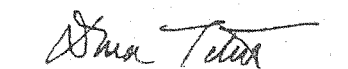
Terri Sewell  
Member of Congress



Lamar Smith  
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress



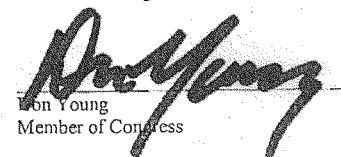
Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



Ron Young  
Member of Congress

*Earl L. 'Buddy' Carter*

Buddy Carter  
Member of Congress

*Bruce Poliquin*

Bruce Poliquin  
Member of Congress

*Tim Murphy*

Tim Murphy  
Member of Congress

[Additional submissions by Mr. Polis follow:]



February 4, 2016

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS PRH CHANGE NOTICE NO. 15-09
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS  
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS  
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: LENITA JACOBS-SIMMONS  
National Director  
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) Revision to Exhibit 3-1,  
Infraction Levels, Definitions, and Appropriate Center Actions, and  
Corresponding Chapter, Exhibit and Appendix Changes

1. Purpose. To ensure Job Corps' Student Conduct System supports a safe, secure learning and living environment for all students and staff, and to strengthen policies related to student misconduct by clearly defining and classifying behavior infractions to facilitate consistent application throughout the Job Corps system.
2. Background. Ensuring a safe environment for students, staff, and centers is one of Job Corps' top priorities. Recent center assessments, Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits, and media-reported events have raised serious concerns about center safety and adherence to Job Corps' behavior management policies, including the Zero Tolerance Policy as specified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Job Corps' PRH Section 3.4, Student Standards of Conduct.

Job Corps is taking action to address concerns raised about inconsistencies in the implementation of its Student Conduct System in response to recommendations of the OIG in its February 2015, report, "Job Corps Needs to Improve Enforcement and Oversight of Student Disciplinary Policies to Better Protect Students and Staff at Centers" (OIG Report). The OIG report recommended several actions Job Corps could take to ensure uniform understanding and enforcement of student conduct policies systemwide. The first of these actions – clearly defining behavior infractions – is addressed in this PRH Change Notice.

Our goal is to ensure that every center offers a safe, positive learning environment and culture that is based on the following guiding principles:

- Setting high behavioral expectations;
- Holding students accountable for their behaviors;
- Including proportional consequences for misbehavior; and

- Enabling students to learn from their mistakes.

3. Reference. As we move forward to implement student conduct reforms, we will learn from and incorporate evidence-based strategies, including those identified by the following initiatives:

- Supportive School Discipline Initiative (SSDI), [supportiveschooldiscipline.org](http://supportiveschooldiscipline.org)
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), [pbis.org/](http://pbis.org/)
- My Brother's Keeper, [whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper](http://whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper)

Center Directors and Operators are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these initiatives.

4. Explanation of Change(s). This PRH Change Notice addresses the following recommendation from the OIG Report:

“Clearly define all misconduct infraction categories to ensure infractions and significant violent offenses are properly classified and addressed. This includes providing specific definitions and/or examples for serious infractions such as physical assault with bodily harm, fighting, threat of physical assault with intent to do bodily harm, threat of assault with intent to intimidate or coerce and sexual harassment.”

Notable major changes include the following:

- a. Section 1.6, Readmission, R1 Readmission Criteria is revised to reflect additional Level I Zero Tolerance Infractions for which readmission is permissible.
  - b. Exhibit 3-1, Infraction Levels and Appropriate Center Actions, is retitled Exhibit 3-1, Infraction Levels, Definitions and Appropriate Center Actions. The exhibit is revised to include clear definitions of each misconduct infraction to align with provisions of WIOA relating to student conduct, and to reflect workplace standards and expectations for conduct where appropriate. Each infraction is assigned as a Level I – Zero Tolerance Infraction, a Level II Infraction, or a Minor Infraction, depending on the severity of the infraction and in accordance with Job Corps' Zero Tolerance policy. Notable changes to Exhibit 3-1 are as follows:
    1. **Definitions** – A definition is provided for each infraction to clarify the types of misconduct or behaviors to which the infraction applies.
    2. **New Column Added: Significant Indicant Report (SIR) Required** – In the interest of facilitating consistency, this column is added to assist centers in determining whether the cited infraction requires that a SIR be entered.
3. **Specific Infraction Changes**

- i. **Assault** – Assault Resulting in Bodily Harm is combined with Assault with Intent to Cause Bodily Harm
- ii. **Threat of Assault** – Threat of Assault is elevated from Level II to Level I.
- iii. **Fighting** – The infraction formerly titled “Fighting” is combined with “Assault,” and elevated to Level I. A new limited provision for cases of self-defense is added.
- iv. **Threat to Safety** – A new infraction and definition are added for Threat to Safety.
- v. **Arrest for a Violent Misdemeanor** – Arrest for a Violent Misdemeanor is elevated to Level I, and treated the same as an arrest for a felony.
- vi. **Cruelty to Animals** – A new infraction and definition are added for Cruelty to Animals.
- vii. **Possession, Consumption or Distribution of Alcohol while on Center or under Center Supervision** – Elevated to a Level I infraction.
- viii. **Abuse of Alcohol** – A new infraction to address a pattern of alcohol abuse has been added.
- ix. **Use of drugs as evidenced by a positive drug test** – Eliminates the intervention period for positive tests on suspicion. A positive test on suspicion at any time is a Level I infraction.
- x. **Robbery or Extortion** – Elevated to Level I.
- xi. **Arson** – Elevated to Level I.
- xii. **Illegal Activity** – New Level I infraction.
- xiii. **Inciting a Disturbance or Creating Disorder** – Elevated to Level I.
- xiv. **New Level II Infractions** – These new infractions are added:
  - a) False Accusation
  - b) Cheating
  - c) Plagiarism

d) Bringing Disrepute to the Program

xv. **Hazing, Bullying, Initiation, and Harassment** – These infractions are broken into two categories that both remain Level II infractions:

- a) Bullying or Harassment is defined as two or more instances, and recognizes social media as a means of bullying or harassment.
- b) Hazing or initiation is clearly defined.

xvi. **Level III Infractions now Entitled Minor Infractions** – Infractions formerly categorized as Level III are reclassified as Minor Infractions, and are divided into two categories:

- a) Infractions impacting the ability and rights of others to fully participate in and benefit from the program, such as use of profanity or cutting lines.
- b) Infractions impacting the individual student's program participation or progress, such as excessive absences or failure to perform assignments.

- c. New Exhibit 3-3, Menu of Progressive Discipline Interventions and Sanctions for Minor Infractions, has been added. This exhibit is designed to bring consistency, set limitations, and ensure progressive consequences for emerging patterns of minor infractions.
- d. Section 3.4, Student Standards of Conduct, R2, Rules and Sanctions, is revised to make clear that each center must adopt Job Corps' Zero Tolerance Policy as detailed in Exhibit 3-1 as part of its standards of conduct policy. It also reflects the new title of Exhibit 3-1, which is now: Exhibit 3-1, Infraction Levels, Definitions and Appropriate Center Actions.
- e. Section 3.4 Student, Standards of Conduct, R3, Investigation and Disposition of Incidents, is streamlined to bring consistency to the adjudication process by:
  - 1. Revising Exhibit 3-2, Requirements for the Conduct of Fact-Finding Boards, to prescribe the use of a Fact-Finding Board for all board proceedings, and eliminate the use of Behavior Review Panels; and
  - 2. Providing the National Director authority to suspend the time frames for the Fact-Finding Board to issue its decision if the student subject to the Fact-Finding Board is also the subject of an active police investigation.

- f. Section 5.5, Management and Reporting of Significant Incidents, R1, Reportable Events, now requires entry of a SIR for any infraction identified as requiring one in Exhibit 3-1.
  - g. Section 6.11, Related Health Programs, is revised to reflect changes to the drug testing policy. All references to the 45-day intervention period are removed.
    - 1. Under R1 Section e(a)(a), the references to the 45-day intervention period after a positive drug test based on suspicion are eliminated.
    - 2. Under R1 Section e(c)(a), the new Zero Tolerance drug- and alcohol-related infractions are referenced.
    - 3. Under R1 Section e(c)(c), the reference to students who tested negative on entry, but test positive on suspicion of drug use at any time thereafter has been deleted.
  - h. **Procedural Change** – A system of progressive interventions is implemented for Minor Infractions. For each successive infraction, the center will assign the student a combination of interventions and sanctions. The interventions will be tailored to address the specific infraction providing the student an opportunity to learn from his/her mistake. A new Exhibit 3-3, Menu of Progressive Discipline Interventions and Sanctions for Minor Infractions, presents the requirements for progressive discipline.
5. Action Required. Centers will adopt the use of infractions and definitions identified in Exhibit 3-1, Infraction Levels, Definitions and Center Actions (Attachment B); implement revised procedures identified in Exhibit 3-2, Requirements for the Conduct of Fact-Finding Boards (Attachment C); and the progressive discipline requirements identified in Exhibit 3-3, Menu of Progressive Discipline Interventions and Sanctions for Minor Infractions (Attachment D).
- To assist in making the transition to the new infractions and definitions, an Infraction Crosswalk is included as Attachment H. The crosswalk identifies the previous infraction title and provides an explanation of the changes, the corresponding new infraction title, and infraction definition along with examples. The new infraction titles and definitions (Attachment H, Columns 3 and 4) are those included in the new Exhibit 3-1.
- Addressees are to ensure this Change Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.
6. Effective Date. May 2, 2016. In the interim, the National Office of Job Corps will roll out a series of Webinar training sessions on these changes.
7. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to Marcus Gray at (202) 693-3967, or [Gray.Marcus@dol.gov](mailto:Gray.Marcus@dol.gov).

Attachments

- A – PRH Chapter 1
- B – PRH Exhibit 3-1, Infraction Levels, Definitions and Appropriate Center Actions
- C – PRH Exhibit 3-2, Requirements for the Conduct of Fact-finding Boards
- D – PRH Exhibit 3-3, Menu of Progressive Discipline Interventions and Sanctions for Minor Infractions
- E – PRH Chapter 3
- F – PRH Chapter 5
- G – PRH Chapter 6
- H – Infraction Crosswalk

August 30, 2016

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS PROGRAM INSTRUCTION NOTICE NO. 16-09
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
 ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
 ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS  
 ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS  
 ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS  
 ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: LENITA JACOBS-SIMMONS  
 National Director  
 Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Safety and Security – Cooperation with Law Enforcement

1. Purpose. To affirm to the Job Corps community Center Operators' responsibility to contact law enforcement when they suspect criminal behavior, or when serious incidents occur.

Additionally, to remind all centers that Job Corps is required to have agreements of cooperation in place with local law enforcement agencies.

2. Background. The program's top priority is to maintain a safe and secure environment for students and staff. Local law enforcement plays an essential role in maintaining a safe center environment. For that reason, the Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) (Section 5.4, R2) requires Center Operators to maintain written agreements of cooperation with the law enforcement agency in the area the center is located.

In addition, the PRH directs Center Operators to contact local law enforcement for all emergency situations involving potential criminal activity, and the threat to the safety and security of Job Corps students and staff including:

- during an active-shooter situation. When it is safe, Center Operators must call 911, and announce there is an "Active-Shooter" event in progress (Section 5.4, R4).
- when an adult student is AWOL and cannot be located (Section 6.1, R3).
- when a minor student is AWOL and the student's parent or legal guardian is unaware of his/her whereabouts (Section 6.1, R3).
- reporting sexual assaults (Section 6.11, R6).

3. Action Required.

A) Centers should always promptly contact local law enforcement by dialing 911 or other emergency number when the need arises.

B) Complete the attached certification to acknowledge the PRH requirements and use of local law enforcement in an emergency. Each center must send via e-mail the certification and its current agreement with law enforcement (executed within the last 12 months) to the Regional COR and [DROPI@dol.gov](mailto:DROPI@dol.gov) at the National Office within 30 days of the date of this directive.

Addressees are to ensure this Program Instruction Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.

4. Effective Date. Immediately.

5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.

6. Inquiries. Questions should be addressed to your respective Job Corps Regional Directors or Rashmi Bartlett, Division Chief of Regional Operations and Program Integrity, at (202) 693-3102.

Attachment

Certification: Cooperative Agreement with Law Enforcement



March 27, 2017

<b>DIRECTIVES:</b>	<b>JOB CORPS PROGRAM INSTRUCTION NOTICE NO. 16-30</b>
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**TO:** ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS  
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS  
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

**FROM:** LENITA JACOBS-SIMMONS  
National Director  
Office of Job Corps

**SUBJECT:** Safety and Security – Cooperation with Law Enforcement

1. Purpose. To affirm to the Job Corps community Center Operators' responsibility to contact local law enforcement when suspected criminal behavior or other serious incidents occur.
2. Background. Job Corps' top priority is to maintain a safe and secure environment for students and staff. Law enforcement plays an essential role in maintaining safety in the community, and providing a safe center environment. For that reason, the Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH 5.4, R2) requires that Center Operators maintain written agreements with local law enforcement.

In addition, the PRH directs Center Operators to contact local law enforcement for all emergency situations involving potential criminal activity and the threat to the safety and security of Job Corps students and staff including:

- The discovery of an active shooter situation. As soon as it is safe to do so, Center Operators must call 911, and announce there is an "Active Shooter" event in progress (PRH 5.4, R4).
- If an adult student is AWOL, and cannot be located after an investigation to determine student's whereabouts (PRH 6.1, R3).
- If a minor student is AWOL, and the student's parent or legal guardian is unaware of the student's whereabouts (PRH 6.1, R3).
- Sexual assaults reportable as required by state and local law (PRH 6.11, R6).

3. Action Required.

Centers should always promptly contact local law enforcement by dialing 911 or any other appropriate phone number.

4. Effective Date. Effective immediately.

5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.

6. Inquiries. Questions should be addressed to your respective Job Corps Regional Directors or Rashmi Bartlett, Division Chief of Regional Operations and Program Integrity, at (202) 693-3102.

[Additional submissions by Ms. Wilson follow:]

**SUCCESS STORIES from Miami Job Corps Center****June 19, 2017****Contact: Lesly Diaz 305-542-8018**

**Jeffery Adams** was among those students that required Tender Loving Care from the Miami Job Corps staff. He willingly tells of his difficult upbringing, some of which reflected in his attitude here at Miami Job Corps. As Jeffery neared his completion of Job Corps in the Building Construction Trade, he was faced with the reality that his Job Corps life was about to come to an end. As a result of spending time in Foster Care, Jeffery had nowhere to go after Job Corps. He stayed in a homeless shelter upon completion.

His Job Corps Career Readiness Manager encouraged Jeffery to take the ASVAB Test as a backup plan, since he was unsure what he wanted to do. After pondering for a while, Jeffery made the decision to enlist in the US Army. Jeffery has made a 180 degree turnaround since his enlistment. He has returned home on occasion and has been given the opportunity to speak with the Miami Job Corps student body about the importance of staying focused and what Job Corps has done for him.

**Dayana Saint-Rose** was couch surfing and virtually homeless when she arrived at Miami Job Corps Center. She became a residential student here at Miami Job Corps. While living on Center, Saint-Rose worked to send money home to her mother and siblings in Haiti. She completed her Health Occupation Training and separated from the Miami Job Corps Center in February of 2016. Saint-Rose always had an interest in the Military and the process began during her Career Transition Readiness Phase. Saint-Rose's enlistment in the US Army began in March of 2016 and she is currently stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

**Ayanna Jiro** came to Miami Job Corps Center as a single mother. Her greatest challenge was to balance caring for her daughter while developing her skills as a Carpentry Pre-Apprentice student. Jiro enrolled her daughter at the Daycare located on Center utilizing the Childcare Allotment program.

The Human Resources Manager from Dyplast Inc., a company specializing in the use of foam to insulate piping, visited the center seeking skilled workers. Her visit was the result of the success of a previous Miami Job Corps student who continues his employment with that company even today. Jiro was highly recommended by the Carpentry Instructor who provided specialized training in the use of the Folk Lift. Jiro is the first female employed in her capacity at Dyplast Inc. The Center continues to get positive feedback about her performance.

June 20, 2017  
 Article written by Lesly Diaz, Career Transition Readiness Specialist  
 Miami Job Corps Center  
 305-542-8018

**For immediate release:**

**Paying it Forward! Two Miami Job Corps students receive job offers  
 from Job Corps alumnus.**

**Local construction site in Miami Gardens provides job opportunities for two Miami Job Corps students.**

Jesus Rivera, age 23 and Hopeton Drummond, age 22, attended the Miami Job Corps for the past year. They trained in Building Construction Technology/Home Builder's Institute and received several certifications in OSHA 10 Safety, EPA Technician and RAMSET. Little did they know their vocational training, skills and certifications would land them a job just five blocks away from Miami Job Corps working for another Job Corps graduate, Juan Camacho Jr.

Over 20 years ago, Juan Camacho Jr. attended and received career technical training (vocational training) at Earl C. Clements Job Corps Center in Kentucky. Every day since then, he has been grateful for how the experience changed his life for the better. Now, more than 20 years after completing the Job Corps program, Juan Camacho Jr. is grateful to be "paying it forward" by interviewing, hiring and training these two young men from the neighboring Miami Job Corps Center. He hopes to hire others soon.

Camacho worked hard to get to where he is today...a construction site Superintendent with his uncle's company Miguel Lopez Jr. Inc. Miguel Lopez Jr. Asphalt Maintenance is a full service asphalt contractor serving Florida since 1989, earning a coveted reputation for professionalism, quality, and outstanding service. Miguel Lopez Jr. Inc. is a sub-contractor for the Hawkins Construction Company's shopping center project being built on the corner of NW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NW 183 Street.

Five blocks away from the construction project, also on NW 183 Street, is the U.S. Dept. of Labor's Miami Job Corps Center. Job Corps is designed to assist low income youth ages 16-24 with education and training to assist in making a bright, independent future for themselves.

Jesus Rivera, 23 years old, born in Miami, started working for Camacho the day after he completed Miami Job Corps Center. Hopeton Drummond, 22 years old, also from Miami is doing an internship (Work Based Learning) with Camacho. Both young men came to Miami Job Corps to better their job prospects. Both had a high school diploma but lacked marketable skills.

Jesus Rivera's mother, a single mom working two jobs, suggested Job Corps to him to better his job opportunities. Before that, "I went out every day looking for work but couldn't find anything" stated Rivera. "I am grateful to my Instructors Mr. Fiallo and Mr. Suarez for the job training and also for teaching me the way to work, dress and get ready for the future. I am so happy to have left Miami Job Corps last week with a great job with a great future." Rivera's advice to others is "find a career in something you really, really love to do. Follow your dreams and don't stop praying." Rivera refers to his new boss Camacho as "amazing". "He understands our world and where we are from. Same blood, same heart. He likes helping people and he's teaching me so much" said Rivera.

Hopeton Drummond was raised by his great-grandmother. "She worked and took care of me until I moved to Jacksonville to attend welding school. When I couldn't afford to finish there, I came back to Miami where I worked

boarding up houses and cutting grass as a team member of Greater Miami Service Corps. The Executive Director, Debra Dorsett, took a personal interest in me and contacted Job Corps for me. "Job Corps has been a great experience. My instructors taught me to finish what you start. Not to let anyone stop you. I'm weeks away from completing the Job Corps program and I am working as an intern for Camacho and he has offered me a job when I'm done with Job Corps." "Nothing can stop me now" said Drummond proudly.

To learn more about what Miami Job Corps Center can do for you, please contact Lesly Diaz, Career Transition Readiness Specialist, 305-542-8018.



June 20, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

The Resource Room Child Care & Learning Center is proud to be a partner and advocate of Miami Job Corps. As Executive Director of The Resource Room and a lifetime resident in this community, I have seen lives change in a positive way through the programs, services and partnerships Miami Jobs Corps offers its students.

The atmosphere the administration and staff creates is one of safety, pride and unity. With 50 plus students attending The Resource Room Child Care & Learning Center that is located on the campus, it is vital that the environment is safe. As a partner, Miami Job Corps has included our staff in all safety trainings and emergency procedures to guarantee the safety of the children and staff. Relationships such as this allows us to highlight safety as we invite parents to enroll their child into our center.

Parents have expressed their appreciation of the security process, our relationship with the staff and most importantly our Miami Job Corps Ladies of Elegance student volunteer program, where these young ladies volunteer in the child care assisting our teachers. I am in full support of continued services for Miami Job Corps.

Sincerely,

Ebony Johnson  
Executive Director

19715 NW 37<sup>th</sup> Ave. Miami Gardens, Fl. 33056

Written by Lesly Diaz, Career Transition Readiness Specialist  
Miami Job Corps Center  
Contact info: 305-542-8018

**June 20, 2017**

**For Immediate Release:**

### **HOLISTIC APPROACH AT MIAMI JOB CORPS CENTER HELPS STUDENTS SUCCEED**

Anthony Palermo, age 22, completed Miami Job Corps Center on May 26, 2017 and left for Arcadia, FL with: 1) a transition check from Job Corps of \$900 for completing his high school diploma and Carpenter Pre-Apprentice trade 2) a used car given to him by a family member upon his graduation 3) two of his classmates, Christopher Roman and Terricka Scott, who also completed the trade with him 4) a membership in the United Brotherhood of Carpenters Union and 5) the opportunity of a lifetime to work installing solar panels for Blattner Energy company, an independent general contractor for Florida Power and Light.

All three graduates of Miami Job Corps Center are now working together Mondays-Thursdays making \$16/hour plus benefits and overtime on Fridays and Saturdays. Ms. Alyeda Rodriguez, lead UBC Carpentry Instructor at Miami Job Corps Center said the students' success is due to a "holistic approach". "We here at Job Corps look at the individual, not just his academic and technical training needs. We emphasize that the success of the individual lies with life survival skills. We also "preach" brotherhood, working as a team" stated Rodriguez.

Prior to completing Job Corps and obtaining the job, the students exercised daily in order to pass the physical required. They also studied together for the Safety Test they were needed to pass to be hired. They worked on independent living skills such as budgeting their money, opening bank accounts and researched housing options in the Arcadia area. They even collected non-perishable food from family and friends.

With a "leap of faith", the three jumped in Palermo's car, rented a motel room in Arcadia, put their personal belongings in a storage unit and went to work on the solar panels the next day in clothes and Personal Protective Equipment bought for them by Miami Job Corps Center.

Ms. Aleyda Rodriguez, a member of Local 1809 of the UBC (United Brotherhood of Carpenters) assisted them in getting the job and reassured them of this great opportunity they worked so hard to get. Rodriguez is a Conductor and a Chairperson of the Carpenter's Apprenticeship Program. Through this connection she affords Miami Job Corps graduates direct entry into a registered apprenticeship program with the UBC. Besides being a Union member and getting placed in jobs, the students have further education. They go through a newly created UBC curriculum called "Career Connections" taught by Rodriguez that gives students a one year experience credit to the training they receive at Miami Job Corps Center. That is why Palermo, Roman and Scott are earning \$16/hour plus benefits which is far greater than an entry-level construction job salary.

###



June 21, 2017

Miami Job Corps Center

3050 NW 183 St.

Miami Gardens, FL 33056

To Whom This May Concern:

Hello my name is Patricia Carcamo, I'm currently enrolled at Miami Job Corps. I left my mother's house when I turned 18 years old due to some issues with my stepfather. From there I stayed in 2 other homes but neither of them lasted long. I ended up at a homeless shelter in Orlando and stayed there for 2 years, that's when I made the decision to enroll in the Miami Job Corps program. I was mentally, physically, and emotionally abused in the past.

As a resident of the Miami Job Corps Center, I feel safe and secure. The staff welcomed me with open arms, they treated me like I was family. They are always there for me when I need them. There is a great deal of diversity at the Center with people from various parts of the country and the world. This provides me with an opportunity to learn about various cultures. I live in the dorms and its nothing like the homeless shelter. The dorms are safe, comfortable, and clean. Accountability is a big deal at the Miami Job Corps Center. If you are not where you are supposed to be, someone will come looking for you. I'm proud to call Miami Job Corps my home and will recommend it to anyone who would like to change their life for the better.

All of my hardships and trials have brought me down time and time again but the support from staff and my peers at Miami Job Corps has contributed to the person I am today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Carcamo". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Patricia Carcamo

June 21, 2017

Miami Job Corps Center

3050 NW 183 St.

Miami Gardens, FL 33056

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dylan Mooneyhan. I came to Miami Job Corps Center Oct. 17, 2016 at the age of 17. I was living with my dad and grandfather in Palmetto, FL near St. Petersburg. I was working 30 hours as a cashier/sandwich maker at a nearby fast food restaurant making minimum wage. I heard about Job Corps from my guidance counselor at my high school. I was in 12<sup>th</sup> grade and didn't have enough credits to finish my senior year due to skipping class, missing school and not paying attention.

In a few weeks, I will be completing my training and receiving several certifications including a certificate in the Office Administration trade and leaving with my High School Diploma.

Living on the Miami Job Corps Center for the past eight months provided many opportunities for me and a safe place to learn. I participated in Student Government, was a Recreation Aide and joined the Youth Advisory Committee for the Children's Trust. Recently, I and two other Miami Job Corps students were recognized at the Children's Trust Board Meeting for participating in "Children's Week" in Tallahassee representing both the Children's Trust and Miami Job Corps Center.

Job Corps provided me with a bigger opportunity to live a successful life. Not a second chance at life...a better chance at life. Without Job Corps I would probably still be at home working at fast food, trying to get my GED. I am now going on to bigger things than working behind a cash register. Job Corps opened my eyes to more opportunities. A guest speaker motivated me. He spoke at Miami Job Corps Center's Men's Conference in the gym, a wealthy gentlemen, and told us to achieve your dreams and wealth, don't ever give up. I too, want money, and I want to get it the right way, doing what I love which is designing video games. In the future I hope to attend State College of Florida to become a video game designer. Job Corps is getting me ready for the real world by introducing me to new people, new environment and new experiences. Miami Job Corps Center invites TRIO program on Center to work with students like me on college advising and registration, financial aid application and scholarship opportunities. The staff at Miami Job Corps taught me in the right way and some were my role models.

My best friend at Miami Job Corps, Timmie, had a big impact on me in such a positive way. He gave me a reason to stay. We are even planning on becoming roommates when he completes Job Corps. Having other students encourage me was great. I wanted to give up Job Corps 2 days after I got here. I didn't like being away from home, then after winter break being at home I didn't want to come back. What changed my mind to return? I needed to focus on what was important. I taught myself that. Before Job Corps I wouldn't have felt that way.

Sincerely,



Dylan Mooneyhan

June 21, 2017

Miami Job Corps Center  
3050 NW 183 St.  
Miami Gardens, FL 33056

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is MarcAnthony J. Shivers. I am the President of the Student Government Association at Miami Job Corps Center. Prior to coming to Job Corps, I worked three jobs to help support my family while attending high school. I dropped out in 11<sup>th</sup> grade because I could not make it to school on time because of working late at night. I always knew I could do something much greater. My brother attended the Jacksonville Job Corps Center and told me it was full of opportunities. Along with getting a vocational trade and high school diploma, Job Corps helps with job searching, resume building, career preparation and much more and it is a safe and fun place to be. Staff are very helpful with helping with figuring out a career plan. College wasn't a thought until I came to Job Corps. Now, once I complete my high school diploma and Office Administration trade, I will be attending Miami Dade College Year Up program beginning in August 2017. My future plan is to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Television Broadcasting.

The experiences I have had at Miami Job Corps Center will certainly assist with my future plans. As President of Student Government I regularly speak in front of students, staff and community members. Most recently I escorted the Regional Director of U.S. Senator Marco Rubio on a tour of Miami Job Corps Center. I was a guest presenter at ResCare's corporate leadership conference recently held for their Workforce staff. ResCare operates Miami Job Corps Center for the U.S. Dept. of Labor. I did my internship at U.S. Representative Fredericka Wilson's office. "I would never have had these wonderful opportunities if it wasn't for Job Corps. I also volunteer with events with the City of Miami Gardens so much so that the Mayor even knows me by name!

I am grateful for what Job Corps has done for me and I recommend it for anyone who wants a great place to make your dream happen.

Sincerely,

MarcAnthony J. Shivers

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MarcAnthony J. Shivers", written in a cursive style.

*Reverend Dr. Jimmy Ray Burke, Ph.D.*

P.O. Box 693208  
Miami Gardens, Florida 33269  
burkejimmy@bellsouth.net

June 21, 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

It is indeed a sincere privilege and honor to offer this letter of commendation and support on behalf of the Miami Job Corps Center, the Director Mrs. Mary Geoghegan, the staff, and the many trainees that have completed this federally sponsored occupational trade and life skills development program. This Center Director has been recognized as the front runner of all Job Corps programs nationally for the great standards represented and maintained.

In 1996, after retiring as local Police Chief and Criminal Justice Commissioner for the State of Florida, and coordinating a youth program for Dade County Schools, I became a member of the Miami Job Corps family. My initial responsibility was Manager of Safety, Security and Transportation, and much later becoming Social Development Manager; with residents, Student Government and all leisure time activities. I have visited several Centers functioning in different capacities such as Acting Program Director, to also serving on compliance teams conducting program inspections for quality of service. Traveling throughout the country afforded the opportunity to grasp a broad perspective about the need for quality service, and a view for recognizing that level of service when it existed.

After thirteen years with the Job Corps program, I left due to family and personal concerns; but only to return as a volunteer when Center Director Geoghegan became the leader. Since returning, I have served as Chairman of Community Relations for the center; working closely with local organizations, and participating on strategic planning committees.

I am also a local Pastor and Seminary Professor with compassion for young people, having the desire that they all succeed in life. I hold many degrees; got my start in the military. More importantly, I had lots of help. This national assistance training program by the government must continue. It's a winner for all.

My vast experience and exposure to the many aspects and challenges our youth face today, make me uniquely prepared to offer a perspective on that which is working for our youth. The Miami Job Corps program is a high caliber training entity, with broad community support. Working relations have been established and maintained with the Police Departments, Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, community organizations, public and private schools, and other outreach efforts.

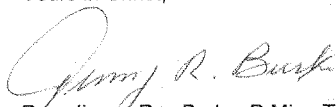
Miami Job Corps provides community service support for local government and state sponsored activities. When locals presented the necessary food items, Thanksgiving Dinner was prepared for a veteran group last year by the students of Culinary Arts trade. Support is provided to the City of Miami Gardens during its "JAZZ in The Gardens," and "National Law Enforcement" and "Peace Walk" activities.

Other activities jointly sponsored by the Police and Job Corps is first the onsite sub-station for the Officers, specialized training of staff and students for Emergency Responses, committee membership by officers, on center "Coffee With COPS" program. Visibility of officers on center reduces uncomfortable feeling around the police. It makes for added security to have the frequent visits by the police, working along with the Security Staff.

The security staff is active, and highly visible on center. Their inclusion in all activities make them vital to the whole process of providing the necessary safety of the students both on center and off center. Recognizing the upcoming technological installation of a camera system on center for safety, which is great, but some consideration should also be given to enhancing the paygrade making the security positions more attractive to higher functioning staff. This awesome responsibility deserves consideration.

I trust that the information that has been provided, as well as my sentiments, be receive with the empathy and compassion intended. The benefit goes to the nation, having well trained and productive youth. Here at Miami Job Corps you have the best program and the best Center Director in the nation. Mrs. Mary Geoghegan deserves your best accolades; she made your program better. You can count on her!!!

Yours in Christ,



Rev. Jimmy Ray Burke, D.Min., Th.D., Ph.D., D.D.  
 Pastor – The Shepherd's House Community Outreach Ministry, Inc.  
 Chairman – Community Relations Committee; Miami Job Corps

**To Know Him and Make Him Known**

[Whereupon, at 12:08 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

